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ABSTRACT

Early Childhood Family Education is a voluntary public school program for Minnesota families with children through kindergarten age. The program's mission is to support parents' ability to provide for their children's development. To determine the program's effectiveness, participating parents were interviewed in the fall of 1990 and again at the end of the school year. A total of 183 parents, including 16 single parents and 11 teen parents, were questioned about child development, parent-child interactions, family life, and parental self-care. Results indicated that at least 59 percent of teen parents, 67 percent of single parents, and 60 percent of a nonspecific parent group exhibited changes in knowledge or behavior during the year of program participation. Parents especially exhibited: (1) increased feelings of support from others; (2) increased self-confidence; (3) an increased knowledge about child development; (4) changed expectations for themselves and their children; and (5) changed behavior resulting from increased support, confidence, and knowledge. Parent responses are discussed separately for the three parent groups. Eleven case studies of representative parents are presented. Ten recommendations for curriculum and program development and six recommendations for further program evaluation are offered. Appendices include the pilot questions for the interview; a packet containing the final interview materials; and a list of themes addressed by the interview questions. (BC)

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CHANGING TIMES, CHANGING FAMILIES
MINNESOTA EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION
PARENT OUTCOME INTERVIEW STUDY

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MARCH, 1992

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Michael Q. Patton served as a consultant throughout the entire evaluation project, from its conceptualization to its completion. He was involved in the design of the project, facilitated the three group meetings of Early Childhood Family Education staff during the project, and worked closely with Betty Cooke in the development of the data gathering and analysis process and in the editing of this report. Patton was involved with evaluation of the early pilot Early Childhood Family Education programs from 1977-79 while he was Director of the Minnesota Center for Social Research at the University of Minnesota and is familiar with the history, philosophy, and development of the program. He began working with the State Early Childhood Family Education Evaluation Committee in 1989 to help determine program evaluation priorities and design this study. He brought a wealth of expertise to guide this evaluation work along with a warm, personable, and respectful way of involving program staff in the process.

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The **State Early Childhood Family Education Evaluation Committee** members listed below were involved in the conceptualization, design, and review of this entire evaluation project. Their combined perspectives and expertise played a major role in shaping this work. Special thanks to Karen Kurz-Riemer, chair of the Evaluation Committee, and Marilyn Larson, past Evaluation Committee chair, for their work with Patton, Engstrom, and Cooke in the conceptualization and early implementation of the study.

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The following Early Childhood Family Education program staff members were involved in some or all phases of this evaluation project. These individuals played a role in designing the evaluation, developing the interview questions, piloting the questions and process, conducting the interviews, transcribing the parent interview data, analyzing the results, and editing the final report. (This list does not include the local program support staff who also helped with transcription of the interviews in many programs.) These are the individuals most central to the successful implementation and completion of this type of evaluation project. They willingly committed hours of their time and their energy and expertise to a project that involved a degree of risk taking as they "charted new territory" in program evaluation. Special notation (*) is made of the 31 individuals who spent two intense days analyzing the interview data in June 1991. They completed a complex and demanding task with dedication and integrity reflective of the quality of staff in Early Childhood Family Education programs statewide.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) is a voluntary public school program for all Minnesota families with children between the ages of birth and kindergarten. The mission of Early Childhood Family Education is to strengthen families and support the ability of parents to provide the best possible environment for the healthy growth and development of their children.

Staff in Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education programs worked with Michael Q. Patton, nationally known and widely published program evaluator at the University of Minnesota, and Betty Cooke, Early Childhood Family Education Specialist with the Minnesota Department of Education, to study the effects of the program on parent participants. A set of interview questions was developed to be asked of parents new to the program prior to and at the end of participation during the 1990-91 school year. The questions focused on core elements of change likely to occur for parents in Early Childhood Family Education programs across the state.

The questions and procedures for asking them were piloted during the winter and spring of 1990. In the fall of 1990, parents new to Early Childhood Family Education were interviewed just prior to their first class series. These parents were asked similar questions at the end of the school year; 183 parents completed the study -- 156 in general parent groups, 16 in parent groups specifically for single parents, and 11 in teen parent groups.

The interview data from each group were analyzed separately. The staff involved in the study worked two days in June 1991 analyzing the data. Analysis involved identifying changes in the parents' responses after participating one year in the program.

As indicated below, the majority of coded parent responses reflected parent change in feelings, knowledge, expectations, and behavior after up to one year of participation in an Early Childhood Family Education program.

Parent Group	Number of Coded Responses		
	"No Change"	"Change"	Total Responses
General	874 (39.3%)	1346 (60.7%)	2220 (100%)
Single	76 (33%)	153 (67%)	229 (100%)
Teen	59 (41%)	86 (59%)	145 (100%)
Total Responses	1,009	1,585	2,594

Five overall change themes were evident in the responses across groups and interview questions. These changes included:

1. Increased feelings of support from others; knowing they are "not alone" in their feelings and experiences and that other parents have the same problems and concerns;
2. An increased sense of confidence and self-esteem as a parent;
3. Increased knowledge, awareness, and understanding about children and child development and the parental role in relation to child development;
4. Changed perceptions and expectations for themselves as parents and for their children based on increased knowledge, awareness, and understanding about children and child development and the parental role in relation to child development; and
5. Changes in parent behavior based on increased feelings of support from others, increased self-confidence, increased knowledge, and changed perceptions and expectations of their children and themselves.

The following recommendations were made based on study results and the input of Early Childhood Family Education staff involved in data analysis.

For Curriculum and Program Development:

1. Incorporate knowledge of child development and parent-child relations/family relations into all programming.
2. Provide continuous opportunities to address ongoing issues related to guidance of children.
3. Communicate the importance of support from others.
4. Increase recognition of the value and use of parent-child interaction as an especially powerful learning experience for parents.
5. Clearly communicate program goals to parents.
6. Continue emphasis on parent self-esteem and parent self-care as being of value both to parents personally and to their families.
7. More explicitly incorporate development of family communication and problem solving skills into program content.
8. Provide ongoing, weekly, long-term participation/involvement opportunities for parents.
9. Increase involvement of both parents.
10. Encourage and continue to create ways for family members to spend more time together.

For Further Evaluation:

1. Conduct more extensive and extended follow-up of the program participants interviewed.
2. Do more extensive studies of the different types of parent change noted in relation to the five change themes identified, i.e., increased feelings of support from others, increased self-esteem, increased knowledge, and changes in perceptions and expectations and behavior.
3. Conduct more extensive and diverse Early Childhood Family Education outcome studies including:
 - Observational studies of parent behavior and parent-child interaction
 - Studies of change in the parent-child relationship
 - Studies of specific change in children
 - Studies of change in family interaction
 - Studies of the role of the program in the development and enhancement of feelings of support from others
4. Conduct studies focusing on the relationship between program processes and outcomes.
5. Conduct studies of the impact of the program on specific parent populations.
6. Study the impact of involvement in the study on Early Childhood Family Education staff and programs.

INTRODUCTION

Parent A's comments before participation in response to the question, "Okay, your child is two years old. What are two year olds like?": *I don't know. I never spent any time around small children, and quite frankly, I was petrified. I don't know what they're like. My cousins were a lot younger, but we lived out of state so I wasn't around any extended, any smaller extended family when I was growing up so I didn't have any experience with little kids.*

Parent A's comments after participation in response to the same question: *He's close to three now, and threes are a lot more sunny dispositioned. They are more agreeable, and he is. He wants to please now. Threes want to fit in. They want to belong. Threes also play more elaborate imaginative games with toys and friends. They like to create with art materials, and Jacob loves that. Threes are able to carry on conversations. Discussions now are more than "What's that?" He is a big talker, so we talk a lot. Threes are less active than twos and can sit and listen longer. Threes are very much more able to share, take another's point of view and empathize. Jacob is much more sensitive to other people's feelings now. Also threes are better able to separate and be away from Mom longer.*

Parent B's comments before participation in response to the question, "We know there are times when parents feel really full of love for a child and other times when they don't feel so loving. What do you do when you don't feel so loving?": *It depends when I don't feel so loving. I would guess that would be when I judge that he would be in need of some sort of discipline, and sometimes I just try to distance myself from it so I could cool off, or I don't know. I guess that's what I do. I just go to another room until the mood passes.*

Parent B's comments after participation in response to the same question: *Probably withdraw. I don't do the silent treatment thing. It's more like leave Mommy alone for a couple of minutes. Or I sit down and try to read the paper or something like that.*

Parent B's comments after participation in response to the follow-up question, "Has the way you express feelings to your child changed in any ways in the last few months?": *Well, I don't think I get angry as easily as I used to. I think I'm a little better at stopping and thinking and trying alternatives to yelling and spanking. I think I've gotten better trying to distract him to dissipate his anger or whatever, or to dissipate my anger.*

Parent C's comments after participation in response to the question, "What changes, if any, have you noted in your child or family from participating in this program? What are the main things you yourself have gotten from participating in the program?": *I have noticed changes. It's just so much easier to know you're not the only person who goes through things. You wonder, "Am I doing this right?" Especially since I haven't had experience with little kids. Just to hear some of the things people say, it's almost like your own story being told sometimes. Then when a situation comes up again, you can sit back and not be so uptight about it. It's normal, and it's okay.*

Change in knowledge, change in behavior, change in support -- these changes are what Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) is all about. Uncovering evidence of these types of change in parents after a year or less of participation in Early Childhood Family Education was the intent of this study. But before explaining the study and study results, "What is Early Childhood Family Education? Why is it needed? What happens in it?" The following description provides an overview of the program and an introduction to the study as a prelude to the report of the study process and results.

Early Childhood Family Education is a voluntary public school program for all Minnesota families with children between the ages of birth and kindergarten. It is currently offered through Community Education in 380 school districts and the four tribal schools in Minnesota encompassing 98 percent of the families with young children in the state. More than 213,000 young children and their parents participated in the program during the 1990-91 school year. It recognizes that families provide children's first and most important learning environments and parents are children's first and most significant teachers. The mission of Early Childhood Family Education is to strengthen families and support the ability of all parents to provide the best possible environment for the healthy growth and development of their children. Funded by over \$26 million in state aid and local levies in fiscal year 1992, it is the nation's largest and oldest program of its kind.

Changes in society underscore the need for Early Childhood Family Education. The high divorce rate creates a growing number of single parent and stepparent families. Economic pressures result in more families in which both parents are employed. A growing percentage of children and families are living in poverty which makes meeting even basic needs a daily struggle. The high mobility and general complexity of modern life combine with these and other factors to create intense stress on families of all income levels.

Early Childhood Family Education programs meet the needs of families in their communities in a variety of ways. Most programs include the following:

- Parent discussion groups
- Play and learning activities for children
- Parent-child interaction activities
- Special events for the entire family
- Home visits
- Early screening for children's health and developmental problems
- Information on other community resources for families and young children
- Libraries of books, toys, and other learning materials

Various types and intensities of services are offered. Families select those most appropriate for them. Typically a family attends a two hour session each week which includes parent-child interaction time and additional learning opportunities for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers while parents are involved in a discussion group. Families needing more or different services may receive home visits and other more specialized services. Programs also offer special sessions for families with specific concerns such as single parents, teen

parents, parents of children with disabilities, employed parents, and others. It is the goal of Early Childhood Family Education to serve a representative cross-section of families with young children. This frequently requires special outreach and program delivery strategies.

Program activities are provided at a variety of times during the day, evenings, and weekends by qualified parent educators and early childhood teachers. Program sites include schools, shopping centers, apartment buildings, homeless shelters, churches, and other community facilities. The programs work closely with education, health, and human service agencies to assist parents and children in obtaining other services when needed.

Staff in Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education programs worked with Michael Q. Patton, nationally known and widely published program evaluator at the University of Minnesota, from February 1990-June 1991 to study the effects of the program on parent participants. The concept for the Early Childhood Family Education parent outcome interview study was arrived at through joint discussions between Patton and members of the State Early Childhood Family Education Evaluation Committee. It was recognized that more needs to be known about the effect of Early Childhood Family Education programs on parent participants since a major assumption underlying program practice is that parents are critical to their children's development and learning. Many indications about these outcomes continued to be evident to Early Childhood Family Education program staff, and this study provided an opportunity to look at parent outcomes more systematically than had yet been done.

Evaluation has been a priority with Early Childhood Family Education since it began as a pilot program in 1975 (See Kurz-Riemer, K., & Engstrom, L. March 1, 1986. Evaluation Study of Early Childhood Family Education: Report to the Legislature. St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Education.). Most evaluations of the program have been formative evaluations and have produced findings that have significantly assisted in the development of the program. A State Early Childhood Family Education Evaluation Committee was established in 1986 to guide the various types of program evaluation needed across the state. This group developed a comprehensive evaluation plan of which the parent outcome study is a part.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Interview Process and Question Development

A subcommittee of the State Early Childhood Family Education Evaluation Committee selected 28 program sites to pilot and conduct the parent outcome study based on the following three criteria: (1) at least three years of program operation; (2) interest and feasibility; and (3) statewide geographic distribution with a range in population, size of budget, and rural, urban, and suburban representation. The coordinators of these programs were contacted to determine their interest in participation in the study, and all accepted. One to three staff members from each of these programs worked with Patton for a day in February 1990 to develop the evaluation process and interview questions to use in piloting the study.

At this initial meeting of staff from the selected Early Childhood Family Education programs, Patton set the stage for the study by describing its innovative nature, the fact that this kind of study is on the cutting edge of program evaluation, and the fact that it is considered controversial in some academic circles. The group discussed the following principles, developed by the State Early Childhood Family Education Evaluation Committee, to guide the study:

- Conduct a non-intrusive study,
- Conduct a study which supports diversity in the program and participants,
- Conduct a study which involves a reasonable amount of effort on the part of everyone involved, and
- Conduct a study that is helpful, useful, and oriented toward program improvement.

A key criterion of the study suggested by Patton and strongly endorsed by everyone involved was that of designing a study which made the evaluation process part of the regular, everyday program and involved program staff in data collection and analysis. This approach includes making the evaluation process part of the program experience for participants as well as staff and becomes a reflective process for both program participants and staff.

An open-ended interview process using straightforward, understandable questions was selected as the methodology most appropriate for fulfilling the intent of the study. This

type of interview provides the opportunity to understand the perspective of the parents being interviewed and to find out from them their experiences as a parent.

Patton led the group through a process of developing a set of interview questions to be asked of parent participants prior to and at the end of participation in a program over a specified period of time. The questions were designed to focus on core elements of change likely to occur for parents in Early Childhood Family Education programs across the state including changes in support, knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. Since Early Childhood Family Education staff developed the questions, the assumption was made that, in spite of great diversity in statewide program design and delivery, content related to the questions was an integral part of all Early Childhood Family Education programs.

The group identified the following four specific criteria for the interview questions and process:

- Use of sensitive wording in interview questions,
- Interview questions that could be answered by most parents,
- Interview questions likely to yield answers showing change, and
- Interview questions and a process that would help clarify overall program processes for parents and program staff.

After the meeting, study participants were sent the set of questions they had developed, guidelines for a pilot test of the questions, and a book chapter by Patton on thoughtful interviewing (See Appendix A on page 165 for the initial set of questions and pilot test guidelines.). The questions and the processes for asking them were piloted between February and the end of the 1989-90 school year.

As indicated in the guidelines, program staff conducting the interviews were encouraged to experiment with the questions to discover which ones worked best for them and the parents interviewed and to experiment with different interview approaches, both individual and group. The interviews were not to be referred to as an evaluation, but rather as a process for helping parents reflect on their experience as parents. Each person doing the interviewing was asked to interview at least five parents and to keep a careful record of what they did, their reactions, and the reactions of the parents. Parents new to the program were interviewed, if possible. If not enough new participants were available,

interviewers also did postprogram only interviews with parents not new to the program since the main purpose of the pilot phase of the project was to test the interview questions and process. Guidelines for recording and transcribing the interview data for analysis were provided. A day was scheduled for June 1990 to bring everyone involved together again to learn how to analyze the data and to review how the process had gone in the pilot phase in order to refine the process for the actual study conducted during the 1990-91 school year.

Pilot Testing the Interview Process and Questions

Following the February meeting, Betty Cooke was hired by the Minnesota Department of Education as Early Childhood Family Education Specialist to work with Lois Engstrom, statewide supervisor of Early Childhood Family Education and a major force in its development over the past 10 years. Cooke had been a member of the State Early Childhood Family Education Evaluation Committee since it began and had been closely involved with this project from its inception. One of Cooke's responsibilities was that of program evaluation; therefore, she began to work in cooperation with Patton in the ongoing supervision and design of the project.

Each Early Childhood Family Education program participating in the study was asked to provide a preliminary report on their pilot interview experiences in April 1990. This information provided a statewide picture of the number and types of parents interviewed, the interview processes used, and any problems or questions encountered in the process.

These responses led to refining several of the study procedures by the time the group met again in June. It was decided that, if possible, all parents interviewed would be new participants in the program. Most of those interviewed would be first-time parents, and some programs would also interview a number of single parents, teen parents, and parents from two-parent low-income families. The programs designated to interview these specific groups of parents were identified at the June meeting. It was also decided that it would be best to only retain parents in the study who participate a minimum of two of the three quarters of the year. This allowed programs to add new participants to the study throughout the fall and in the beginning of January and to keep parents in the study who dropped out in the spring or who dropped out in the winter and returned in the spring. Finally, it was decided, based on information from piloting the questions, that only individual interview procedures would be used for the interviews.

A one-day meeting was held in June 1990 to:

- Learn how to analyze the data collected,
- Share experiences piloting the interview questions and process, and
- Finalize the design to be used in the fall.

Study interviewers worked in small groups with the transcribed answers to two of the interview questions from every participating program to first identify themes (words or phrases that label something to distinguish that piece from another piece) evident in the data. The small groups then went on to identify changes in preprogram to postprogram answers reflecting these themes. This process of learning to analyze the data not only helped the group understand content analysis of interview data, but it also helped them review the interview process and questions. The small groups completed their work by refining the interview questions which had produced the data they had analyzed. A two-day meeting was scheduled for June 1991 for group analysis of the interview data from the 1990-91 school year preprogram and postprogram interviews.

After the June 1990 analysis session, all staff participants were sent the following information for them to use to conduct the study throughout the coming school year:

- The interview questions and guidelines for administering the interviews including sampling procedures,
- The list of programs specifically assigned to interview designated groups of parents,
- A summary form for recording information about the interview process used, and
- A form for recording a profile of participation for each parent interviewed that included information about the forms to use for obtaining parent background information (See Appendix B on page 170.).

Preprogram Questions

Introduction: We want to begin by giving you a chance to think about some of the things you do as a parent. We know that no two children are exactly alike and no two parents are the same. These questions will get at some of the ways you approach being a parent and some of your thoughts about your child and family. There aren't any right or wrong answers. Let's begin with some questions about your child.

1. Tell me a little about your child. What is your child like? (Probe, if needed: What are some of the things your child is doing these days?)
2. Okay, your child is _____ years old. What are _____ year olds like? (Probe, if needed: What stands out to you about _____ year olds?)

3. What do you and your child enjoy doing together?
4. We know there are times when most parents feel really full of love for a child and other times when they don't feel so loving.
 - a. What do you do when you want to show your child love?
 - b. What do you do when you don't feel so loving?
5. How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do? (Optional clarifications, if needed: How do you try to get your child to mind you, or obey you, or do what you want?)
6. What do you do when your child is angry?

Transition Statement: Okay, we've been talking a lot about your child and what you do with your child. Now I'd like to ask you to think some about yourself as a parent. We've found that most parents have some things they feel they do well as a parent, and some things they don't feel they do so well.

7.
 - a. What do you think you do well as a parent?
 - b. What do you not do so well as a parent?
8. Now let's switch to your family life more generally. At times we all like some things about family life and dislike some things.
 - a. What do you like about your family life?
 - b. When you have a problem with your family life, maybe something you don't like about your family or something you want to change, what do you do?
9. As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself?
10. (Optional) How do you feel about answering these kinds of questions? (Probe if needed: What's it like for you to answer these questions?)

Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me about your family and your parenting. We look forward to having you in our program. Later in the year I hope we'll get another chance to talk individually and do some follow up on your experiences.

Postprogram Questions

Introduction: At the time you were just beginning the program you may recall that I interviewed you (or -- you were interviewed -- if interviewer has changed) about some things you did as a parent. This is a follow-up interview to see how things look to you now. Some of the questions are pretty much the same and your answers may be the same, or they might be different. There are no right or wrong answers since we know that no two children are exactly alike and no two parents are the same. These questions will get at some of the ways you approach being a parent and some of your thoughts about your child and family. Let's begin with some questions about your child.

1. Tell me a little about your child. What is your child like? (Probe, if needed: What are some of the things your child is doing these days?)
2. Okay, your child is now ____ years old. What are ____ year olds like? (Probe, if needed: What stands out to you about ____ year olds?)

3. What do you and your child enjoy doing together?
 - a. Has the way you spend time together changed in any way in the last few months?
4. We know there are times when most parents feel really full of love for a child and other times when they don't feel so loving.
 - a. What do you do when you want to show your child love?
 - b. What do you do when you don't feel so loving?
 - c. Has the way you express feelings to your child changed in any ways in the last few months?
5. How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do? (Optional clarifications, if needed: How do you try to get your child to mind you, or obey you, or do what you want?)
 - a. Have your approaches to getting your child to do things changed in any ways in the last few months?
6. What do you do when your child is angry?

Transition Statement: Okay, we've been talking a lot about your child and what you do with your child. Now I'd like to ask you to think some about yourself as a parent. We've found that most parents have some things they feel they do well as a parent, and some things they don't feel they do so well.

7. a. What do you think you do well as a parent?
- b. In your interview at the beginning of the program you were asked what you didn't do well as a parent. You said: " _____ " How do you feel about that now?
8. Now let's switch to your family life more generally. At times we all like some things about family life and dislike some things.
 - a. What do you like about your family life?
 - b. When you have a problem with your family life, maybe something you don't like about your family or something you want to change, what do you do?
9. As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself?
 - a. Has the way you take care of yourself changed in any way in the last few months?
10. What changes, if any, have you noted in your child or family from participating in this program?
 - a. What are the main things you yourself have gotten from participating in the program?

Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me about your family and your parenting. Your perspective is really helpful to us. Thanks.

From Pilot to Full Design Implementation

By the end of January 1991 all preprogram interviews were completed, and postprogram interviews were completed by the end of May. As already indicated, staff were asked to provide a written record of the interview processes used and their reactions to them (See Item (4) form in Appendix B on page 180.). The following is a summary of this information:

Staff involved:

- 36 staff were involved in data gathering in the 24 programs completing preprogram and postprogram interviews.
- 19 of these individuals were parent educators,
- 12 were program coordinators or had combined parent education and program coordination responsibilities,
- 2 were early childhood educators, and
- 3 were in other roles (intern or advisory council member).

Interview process used:

- 19 programs used individual face-to-face interviews only,
- 3 programs used telephone interviews only, and
- 2 programs used a combination of individual face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews.

Average length of interviews: 20-30 minutes

Most interviews were individual face-to-face interviews done by parent educators for 20-30 minutes each. All interview data were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim by program staff. Comments from staff regarding the interview process included the following:

- All were fairly agreeable -- and just fine -- at first a little nervous with tape recorder.
- It was important to call ahead and set up a time to call back and do the actual interview. It was helpful to try and schedule during nap time. Reactions were positive, very willing to cooperate.
- The interviews ran rather smoothly. The parents were willing to answer the questions very openly.

- Need high quality tape recorder, difficult to transcribe.
- Parents thought it was relatively painless -- did not remember the questions so the spring one was not too repetitive.
- Process itself went fine. None of the parents seemed to mind -- I asked first -- using a tape recorder, as well as my writing their responses to assure accuracy. During post interviews, parents seemed more comfortable with the process, however, as well as with the questions. Their answers were usually longer and more detailed.
- Parents would have preferred to have seen questions ahead of time. After preprogram interviews, some parents were more conscious of what they did as a parent when it was related to the questions I had asked.

Parents were also asked to give their responses to the interview questions and process in the last preprogram interview question. The interviewer stated: "How do you feel about answering these kinds of questions?" Probe, if needed: "What is it like for you to answer these questions?" The following overall themes, listed in order of frequency, were evident in the responses of the 117 parents who answered this last question:

- Comfortable with process, e.g., fine, okay, no problem, doesn't bother me (49)
- Stimulated thinking, e.g., will go home and think about other things, makes you think (23)
- Found interesting and important, enjoyed process, e.g., interesting, kinda nice, good, important (15)
- Uncomfortable with process, e.g., kind of personal, embarrassed, nervous, uncomfortable, hard (15)
- Needed more time to think about what to say, e.g., didn't know what to say/to answer, hard to put into words, not used to, need more time to think (10)
- Uncomfortable with parenting, e. g., feel like I'm not doing a very good job, worry about parenting (3)
- Wanted discussion and feedback, e.g., wanted feedback, chance to discuss in group (2)

Clearly, most of the parents found the interview process to be a positive experience, and over 20 percent indicated that the process stimulated their thinking about the issues raised in the questions.

Parent Data

A total of 183 parents completed preprogram and postprogram interviews. Sixteen of these parents were in classes specifically for single parents, and eleven were in classes specifically for teen parents. The other 156 parents were enrolled in non-specific parent classes. This group of parents included a few teen and single parents. They were included in the non-specific group rather than the specific groups for data analysis because they participated in the program with the non-specific groups. It was initially planned that a subgroup of low-income parents from two-parent families would also be studied separately, but parents falling within this category were a part of regular, non-specific classes, so their responses were analyzed along with the larger non-specific group rather than as a separate group.

Both demographic data and participation data were collected from the interviewed parents (See Item (5) and Item (6) forms used in Appendix B on pages 181 and 184.). Information regarding both sets of data follows.

Parent Demographic Data

Demographic information was collected from 147 of the 156 parents interviewed in the non-specific parent group, from 7 of the 11 teen parents, and from all 16 single parents. This information is displayed in Table 1. Some of the key demographic findings from each group are listed below.

Demographics of the non-specific group of parents indicated:

- Most were new to the program (81.6% completed the form at a time when they had participated less than 3 months).
- They were mostly female (94.6%).
- They were most likely to be between 20-29 years old (45.6%) or 30-39 years old (48.3%).
- Most of them were married (93.2%).
- Over 14 percent were high school graduates, and approximately 73 percent had some education beyond high school. Over 40 percent had at least a bachelor's degree.
- Over 44 percent were employed parents, and 51 percent were not employed and were not seeking employment.
- Approximately 14 percent had yearly incomes of less than \$20,000 and another 14 percent had yearly incomes of \$50,000 or more. Most of the parents (25.9%) had incomes between \$35,000-\$49,999.

Table 1

Parent Demographic Data*

	Non-Specific Groups of Parents		Single Parents		Teen Parents	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
(1) LENGTH OF PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM						
Less than 3 months	120	81.6	13	81.3	6	85.7
3 months - 1 year	22	15.0	2	12.5	1	14.3
1 year - 2 years	3	2.0	1	6.3	0	0.0
2 years - 3 years	1	0.7	0	0	0	0.0
More than 3 years	1	0.7	0	0	0	0.0
(2) SEX						
Male	8	5.4	1	6.3	0	0.0
Female	139	94.6	15	93.8	7	100.0
(3) AGE						
Under 20 years old	3	2.0	0	0.0	7	100.0
20-29 years old	67	45.6	7	43.8	0	0.0
30-39 years old	71	48.3	8	50.0	0	0.0
40 years old or older	6	4.1	1	6.3	0	0.0
(4) MARITAL STATUS						
Never married	3	2.0	4	25.0	5	71.4
Married	137	93.2	0	0.0	2	28.6
Widowed	1	0.7	1	6.3	0	0.0
Divorced or separated	4	2.7	11	68.8	0	0.0
No response	2	1.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
(5) EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND						
8th grade or less	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Some high school, no diploma	4	2.7	1	6.3	4	57.1
High school diploma, GED	21	14.3	5	31.3	1	14.3
Some vocational or trade school	14	9.5	0	0.0	1	14.3
Completed vocational/trade school program	13	8.8	3	18.8	1	14.3
Some college; no degree	20	13.6	1	6.3	0	0.0
Associate degree	6	4.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Bachelor's degree	47	32.0	3	18.8	0	0.0
Graduate or professional school degree	13	8.8	1	6.3	0	0.0
Multiple response	9	6.1	2	12.5	0	0.0
(6) EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
Unemployed, not seeking employment (includes full-time homemaker)	75	51.0	6	37.5	3	42.9
Unemployed, seeking employment	6	4.1	3	18.8	2	28.6
Employed less than 25 hours per week	32	21.8	1	6.3	1	14.3
Employed 25 hours or more per week	33	22.4	6	37.5	1	14.3
No response	1	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0

	Non-Specific Groups of Parents		Single Parents		Teen Parents	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
(7) HOUSEHOLD SIZE						
One	0	0.0	1	6.3	0	0.0
Two	4	2.7	8	50.0	0	0.0
Three	67	45.6	4	25.0	2	28.6
Four	51	34.7	2	12.5	0	0.0
Five	22	15.0	1	6.3	0	0.0
Six	1	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Seven	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Eight or more	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
No response	2	1.4	0	0.0	5	71.4
(8) HOUSEHOLD INCOME						
Under \$5,000	4	2.7	3	18.8	4	57.1
\$5,000 - 9,999	4	2.7	8	50.0	1	14.3
\$10,000 - 14,999	4	2.7	2	12.5	2	28.6
\$15,000 - 19,999	9	6.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
\$20,000 - 24,999	18	12.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
\$25,000 - 29,999	23	15.6	2	12.5	0	0.0
\$30,000 - 34,999	24	16.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
\$35,000 - 49,999	38	25.9	1	6.3	0	0.0
\$50,000 or more	21	14.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
No response	2	1.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
(9) RACIAL/ETHNIC BACKGROUND						
White, Non-Hispanic	139	94.6	15	93.8	4	57.1
Black, Non-Hispanic	1	0.7	1	6.3	3	42.9
Hispanic	3	2.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Multiple response	1	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
No response	1	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
(10) LENGTH RESIDENCE IN SCHOOL DISTRICT						
Less than 1 year	36	24.5	4	25.0	0	0.0
1-2 years	16	10.9	2	12.5	0	0.0
2-3 years	13	8.8	3	18.8	1	14.3
3-4 years	9	6.1	1	6.3	0	0.0
4-5 years	9	6.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
5-7 years	20	13.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
7-10 years	7	4.8	0	0.0	1	14.3
More than 10 years	32	21.8	6	37.5	5	71.4
(11) OTHER PROGRAM PARTICIPATION						
Head Start	0	0.0	1	6.3	0	0.0
Special Education	5	3.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
WIC	17	11.6	9	56.3	7	100.0
Food Stamps	9	6.1	9	56.3	4	57.1
AFDC	7	4.8	5	31.3	4	57.1
Free and Reduced Price School Lunch	5	3.4	1	6.3	1	14.3
Day Care Home	24	16.3	3	18.8	1	14.3
Child Care Center	10	6.8	1	6.3	1	14.3
Nursery School	8	5.4	1	6.3	0	0.0
ABE	4	2.7	0	0.0	1	14.3

*Non-specific group of parents = 147; single parents = 16; teen parents = 7.

- Most parents were white (94.6%).
- Almost a fourth of the parents (24.5%) had lived in the school district less than a year.

Demographic information from the 16 single parents indicated:

- Most were new to the program (13 completed the form at a time when they had participated less than 3 months).
- They were mostly female (15).
- They were most likely to be between 20-29 years old (7) or 30-39 years old (8).
- They were single for different reasons -- either divorced or separated (11), never married (4), or widowed (1).
- Five were high school graduates, and eight had some education beyond high school.
- Ten were employed parents or were seeking employment.
- Thirteen had yearly incomes of less than \$15,000.
- All but one was white.
- Nine participated in WIC and received food stamps, and five were on AFDC.

Data from the 7 of 11 teen parents providing demographic information indicated:

- Most were new to the program (6 completed the form at a time when they had participated less than 3 months).
- All were female.
- Five were not married, and two were married.
- Four were not high school graduates.
- Four were employed or were seeking employment.
- All had yearly incomes of less than \$15,000.
- Four were white, and three were black.
- All participated in WIC, and four received food stamps and were on AFDC.

Parent Participation Data

Staff recorded participation data for 144 of the 156 non-specific parent group, all 16 of the single parent group, and 7 of the 11 teen parents. This information indicated the following:

The non-specific group of parents participated an average of 38.5 hours each during the year (Range=12 to 86.5 hours each/year).

- 139 participated in ongoing classes.
- 5 participated in home visits only.

- 10 participated in home visits and ongoing classes.
- 70 participated in special events along with ongoing classes or home visits.

The single parents participated an average of 60 hours each during the year (Range=15 to 148.5 hours each/year).

- 15 participated in ongoing classes.
- 1 participated in home visits only.
- 9 participated in home visits and ongoing classes.
- 8 participated in special events along with ongoing classes or home visits.

The teen parents participated an average of 52.3 hours each during the year (Range=20 to 167 hours each/year).

- 7 participated in ongoing classes.
- 2 participated in home visits and ongoing classes.
- 3 participated in special events along with ongoing classes or home visits.

Data Analysis

In early 1991 participating program staff were asked to submit copies of their transcribed preprogram interview data for preliminary data analysis. Based on analysis of 144 transcribed preprogram interviews, Cooke identified the emerging major themes within the answers to each interview question (See Appendix C on page 185.). These were used as a resource for data analysis at the June 1991 meeting.

In April 1991, program interviewers were sent detailed information regarding the format in which they were to prepare preprogram and postprogram interview data for the two days of analysis in June. They were asked to prepare and bring with them two sets of data for analysis, one set organized by question in order to analyze the data question by question across individuals and another set of data with the entire preprogram and postprogram interview together for each individual parent in order to analyze the data by individual (See Appendix D on page 190 for letter with data preparation details.).

In preparation for the two days of data analysis, Patton and Cooke developed a preliminary scheme for coding types of "no change" or "change" in parent responses from preprogram to postprogram interviews. The following categories were developed for each question, and data analysis worksheets for staff to use during the two days of analysis were prepared

for each of these categories (See Appendix E on page 194 for sample data analysis worksheet.).

As is evident, the categories reflect differences in degree and kind of "no change" or "change." Most categories are the same across questions, but there is some variation in the categories for specific questions. Questions one and two have categories reflecting "no change" or "change" in knowledge only, all other questions have categories reflecting "no change" or "change" in knowledge and reported behaviors, and two questions also include categories related to potential change in feelings. All categories were intended only as guidelines for data analysis. During the actual analysis, participants were encouraged to fine tune, delete, combine, and/or add to the categories as needed based on the actual parent response data being analyzed.

Analysis Categories by Question for Coding Parent Responses

1. Tell me a little about your child? What is your child like?
2. Okay, your child is _____ years old. What are _____ year olds like?
 - A. No pre-post change: Low knowledge level; vague, inappropriate descriptors
 - B. No pre-post change: Adequate knowledge, appropriate descriptors
 - C. Pre-post change in knowledge; type of knowledge change: _____
3. What do you and your child enjoy doing together? Has the way you spend time together changed in any way in the last few months?
4. a. What do you do when you want to show your child love?
4. b. What do you do when you don't feel so loving? Has the way you express feelings to your child changed in any ways in the last few months?
5. How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do? Have your approaches to getting your child to do things changed in any ways in the last few months?
6. What do you do when your child is angry?
7. a. What do you think you do well as a parent?
7. b. What do you not do so well as a parent?
8. b. When you have a problem with your family life, maybe something you don't like about your family or something you want to change, what do you do?
 - A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low knowledge, age inappropriate
 - B. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: High knowledge, age appropriate
 - C. (1) Change in behavior selection/choice: Start doing
 - C. (2) Change in behavior selection/choice: Stop doing
 - D. (1) Change in quantity of behavior: More
 - D. (2) Change in quantity of behavior: Less
 - E. Change in quality of behavior
8. a. What do you like about your family life?
9. As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself? Has the way you take care of yourself changed in any way in the last few months?
Same as A.-E. above in addition to F.-J. below.

- F. No pre-post change in feelings: Low knowledge, inappropriate
 - G. No pre-post change in feelings: High knowledge
 - H. (1) Change in feelings: Start feeling
 - H. (2) Change in feelings: Stop feeling
 - I. (1) Change in quantity of feeling: More
 - I. (2) Change in quantity of feeling: Less
 - J. Change in quality of feeling
10. What changes, if any, have you noted in your child or family from participating in this program? What are the main things you yourself have gotten from participating in the program?
- Child, Family, or Parent:
- A. No pre-post change: Low level
 - B. No pre-post change: High level
 - C. Change: Moderate
 - D. Change: Dramatic

Thirty-two individuals from the programs involved throughout the evaluation project worked together for two days in June 1991 to analyze and begin to interpret the interview data. They represented 24 of the original 28 Early Childhood Family Education programs that were initially involved in the study. Four of the original district programs dropped out of the study because of time constraints or other staff demands.

Data from 183 parents from the 24 programs completing preprogram and postprogram interviews were analyzed during the two days. As already indicated, sets of data from 16 single parents and 11 teen parents participating in classes specifically for these groups were analyzed separately. The responses from the remaining 156 parents were analyzed as a group.

Patton and Cooke guided the two-day analysis process. During the first day of analysis, the entire group worked on the first set of data organized by question in order to analyze the data question by question across individuals from the group of 156 parents. Participants worked in small groups of three or four. Each small group was assigned a question or a part of a question to analyze. Participants read through all of the preprogram and postprogram interview responses to their question and then began to identify categories or themes that emerged from the data indicating the degree and/or type of "no change" or "change" evident in the responses. After these categories were identified, participants physically grouped responses in the categories by cutting and taping parent responses on the worksheets provided. Categories suggested on the worksheets were refined or changed as participants adjusted them to the themes they discovered in the data. After several hours of analysis, participants discussed and recorded their initial findings and reactions to the process in their small groups. These ideas were then shared in the entire group and

provided insight for further analysis. Some of the small groups concluded the question by question data analysis by the end of the first day, and others continued the process into the next morning. Every clear, logical response made by a parent was assigned to a particular category. Parent responses were eliminated only if the response was incomplete or unclear. Very few were eliminated.

The second day two small groups worked on the analysis of the single parent and teen parent data, adapting the process used for analysis of the larger data set. Patton explained the process of writing case studies, and other participants used the second set of data with the entire preprogram and postprogram interview together for each individual parent to write case studies representative of individual interviewed parents. Following a block of time spent on individual work on case studies, several participants read their case studies to the entire group as a way of further clarifying the nature of a case study. Each participant not involved in the two special group analyses left the second day with the assignment of completing and returning a typed copy of their case study within two weeks after the analysis days. Twenty-five completed case studies were submitted.

Following the two days of analysis, Cooke reread all parent responses and verified the accuracy of the category system for each question and question part and the placement of data in each category. A few categories were combined because the categories and the responses in each were very similar or overlapped. Some responses were shifted into categories where the responses seemed to fit more accurately than the one in which they had been placed by small group members. The vast majority of categories identified and the categorization of responses done by the small groups were clear and accurate as judged by Cooke. Following the verification process, the number of responses in each category was counted, and percentages were calculated.

RESULTS

The following results are based on the responses of the 156 parents in the non-specific parent group. Following a detailed description of their responses to the ten preprogram and postprogram interview questions with examples, a separate section addresses the single parent and teen parent results. An additional section contains the case studies of individual representative parents.

Results of Non-Specific Parent Group

Table 2 lists each interview question, the "no change" and "change" coding categories for each question, and the number and percent of "no change" and "change" responses by question and category for the group of 156 parents. Table 3 combines the number and percent of "no change" category responses and "change" category responses to each question for this group of parents and lists the questions and corresponding numbers and percentages in descending order from highest to lowest percent of response change.

As evident in Tables 2 and 3, the majority of coded parent responses for the group of 156 parents (N=2,220; no change=874 [39.3%]; change=1,346 [60.7%]) indicated parent change after up to one year of participation in an Early Childhood Family Education program. The greatest amount of change was evident in the responses to question ten (88.5%), the one question that directly asked parents to describe noted change in themselves, their children, and their families. The percent of change was also high in response to question 3 (86.8%) regarding change in parent-child interaction activities and behaviors and questions 4b and c (73.0%) regarding strategies of parent-child interaction used when parents did not feel so loving toward their children. Questions 7b (67.4%), 6 (63.4%), and 5 (63.0%) also dealt with issues regarding parent-child interaction strategies, i.e., thinking about what you do not do so well as a parent, responding when your child is angry, and getting your child to do what you want him/her to do, and all received a higher percentage of "change" than "no change" response. Questions eliciting responses showing lower percentages of change -- 7a (46.6%), related to what parents think they do well as a parent and 8a (43.75%), related to what parents like about family life and interaction -- dealt with situations parents already found satisfying when they entered the program; and it is logical that parents would be less likely to change in these areas. The questions with responses showing the least amount of change, questions 1 and 2 (32.0%), were questions

Table 2

Number and Percent of "No Change" and "Change" Responses by Question in Each Question Category in Group of 156 Parents

QUESTION	NO CHANGE			CHANGE			TOTAL	
	CATEGORY	#	%	CATEGORY	#	%	#	%
(1) Tell me a little about your child. What is your child like?	(A) No knowledge change, low knowledge	36	11.0	(C) Change in knowledge	103	32.0		
(2) Okay, your child is __ years old. What are __ year olds like?	(B) No knowledge change, moderate to high knowledge	186	57.0					
QUESTION TOTALS:		222	68.0		103	32.0	325	100.0
(3) What do you and your child enjoy doing together?	(A) No behavior change, low knowledge	4	2.4	(C1) Behavior change due to increased variety of activities	34	20.3		
(3a) Has the way you spend time together changed in any way in the last few months?	(B) No behavior change, moderate to high knowledge	18	10.8	(C2) Behavior change due to development of child	56	33.5		
				(D1) Change in quantity of behavior: More	19	11.4		
				(D2) Change in quantity of behavior: Less	14	8.4		
				(E) Change in quality of behavior	22	13.2		
QUESTION TOTALS:		22	13.2		145	86.8	167	100.0
(4a) We know there are times when most parents feel really full of love for a child and other times when they don't feel so loving. What do you do when you want to show your child love?	(A) No knowledge	79	45.7	(B) Change in behavior	94	54.3		
QUESTION TOTALS:		79	45.7		94	54.3	173	100.0

QUESTION	NO CHANGE			CHANGE			TOTAL	
	CATEGORY	#	%	CATEGORY	#	%	#	%
(4b) What do you do when you don't feel so loving?	(A) No behavior change, low knowledge	36	22.0	(C) Change in behavior	120	73.0		
(4c) Has the way you express feelings to your child changed in any way in the last few months?	(B) No behavior change, moderate to high knowledge	9	5.0					
QUESTION TOTALS:		45	27.0		120	73.0	165	100.0
(5) How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do?	(A) No behavior change, low knowledge	18	12.0	(C1) Change in behavior: Increase or start doing	86	59.0		
(5a) Have your approaches in getting your child to do things changed in any ways in the last few months?	(B) No behavior change, moderate to high knowledge	37	25.0	(C2) Change in behavior: Decrease or stop doing	6	4.0		
QUESTION TOTALS:		55	37.0		92	63.0	147	100.0
(6) What do you do when your child is angry?	(A) No behavior change, low knowledge	1	0.8	(C1) Change in behavior: Increase or start doing	74	61.7		
	(B) No behavior change, moderate to high knowledge	43	35.8	(C2) Change in behavior: Decrease or stop doing	2	1.7		
QUESTION TOTALS:		44	36.6		76	63.4	120	100.0
(7a) What do you think you do well as a parent?	(A) No behavior change, low knowledge	8	5.0	(C) Change in behavior	75	46.6		
	(B) No behavior change, moderate to high knowledge	78	48.4					
QUESTION TOTALS:		86	53.4		75	46.6	161	100.0

QUESTION	NO CHANGE			CHANGE			TOTAL	
	CATEGORY	#	%	CATEGORY	#	%	#	%
(7b) What do you not do so well as a parent?	(A) No behavior change, low knowledge	27	19.1	(C1) Change in behavior: Increase or start doing	46	32.6		
	(B) No behavior change, moderate to high knowledge	19	13.5	(C2) Change in behavior: Decrease or stop doing	10	7.1		
				(D) Change in quality of behavior	27	19.1		
				(E) Change in feelings	12	8.6		
	QUESTION TOTALS:	46	32.6		95	67.4	141	100.0
(8a) What do you like about your family?	(A) No behavior change, moderate to high knowledge	50	31.25	(B) Change in behavior	42	26.25		
	(C) No change in feelings, moderate to high knowledge	40	25.00	(D) Change in feelings	28	17.50		
	QUESTION TOTALS:	90	56.25		70	43.75	160	100.0
(8b) When you have a problem with your family life--maybe something you don't like about your family or something you want to change--what do you do?	(A) No behavior change	70	44.0	(B) Change in behavior: Increase or start doing	65	41.0		
				(C) Change in quality of behavior	24	15.0		
	QUESTION TOTALS:	70	44.0		89	56.0	159	100.0

QUESTION	NO CHANGE			CHANGE			TOTAL	
	CATEGORY	#	%	CATEGORY	#	%	#	%
(9) As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself?	(A) No change in behavior	78	43.0	(B1) Change in behavior: Increase or start doing	64	35.0		
(9a) Has the way you take care of yourself changed in any way in the last few months?				(B2) Change in behavior: Decrease or stop doing	7	4.0		
				(C1) Change in feelings: Increase or start	24	13.0		
				(C2) Change in feelings: Decrease or stop	8	5.0		
QUESTION TOTALS:					103	57.0	181	100.0
(10) What changes, if any, have you noted in your child or family from participating in the program?	Parent	7	2.2		185	57.6	192	59.8
	Child	28	8.7		86	26.8	114	35.5
(10a) What are the main things you yourself have gotten from participating in the program?	Family	2	0.6		13	4.1	15	4.7
QUESTION TOTALS:		37	11.5		284	88.5	321	100.0
GRAND TOTAL		874	39.3		1,346	60.7	2,220	100.0

Table 3

Number and Percent of "No Change" and "Change" Responses by Question in Group of 156 Parents

QUESTION	NO CHANGE		CHANGE		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
(10) What changes, if any, have you noted in your child or family from participating in the program?	37	11.5	284	88.5	321	100.0
(3) What do you and your child enjoy doing together?	22	13.2	145	86.8	167	100.0
(3a) Has the way you spend time together changed in any way in the last few months?						
(4b) What do you do when you don't feel so loving?	45	27.0	120	73.0	165	100.0
(4c) Has the way you express feelings to your child changed in any way in the last few months?						
(7b) What do you not do so well as a parent?	46	32.6	95	67.4	141	100.0
(6) What do you do when your child is angry?	44	36.6	76	63.4	120	100.0
(5) How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do?	55	37.0	92	63.0	147	100.0
(5a) Have your approaches in getting your child to do things changed in any ways in the last few months?						
(9) As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself?	78	43.0	103	57.0	181	100.0
(9a) Has the way you take care of yourself changed in any way in the last few months?						
(8b) When you have a problem with your family life--maybe something you don't like about your family or something you want to change--what do you do?	70	44.0	89	56.0	159	100.0
(4a) We know there are times when most parents feel really full of love for a child and other times when they don't feel so loving. What do you do when you want to show your child love?	79	45.7	94	54.3	173	100.0
(7a) What do you think you do well as a parent?	86	53.4	75	46.6	161	100.0
(8a) What do you like about your family?	90	56.25	70	43.75	160	100.0
(1) Tell me a little about your child. What is your child like?	222	68.0	103	32.0	325	100.0
(2) Okay, your child is __ years old. What are __ year olds like?						
TOTALS	874	39.3	1,346	60.7	2,220	100.0

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regarding parent knowledge. Parents may indeed come to the program with some basic knowledge about their children and child development, but results indicated they appeared to gain not only more knowledge in many cases, but also a better understanding of how to apply their knowledge to everyday parent-child and family interaction situations. The following question by question discussion gives examples and elaborates in much more detail on the nature and meaning of the "no change" and "change" parent responses to each question.

Parent responses to seven questions or question parts were coded into separate "no change" categories reflecting either "low knowledge level, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors" or "moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors." These question or question parts and the corresponding number and percent of responses in each of these two "no change" categories are listed in Table 4 in order of most to least percentage of "no change" responses.

The two categories of "no change" responses provide potential insights into the meaning and significance of the program for the parents making these kinds of responses. The "low knowledge level, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors" group of parents are likely to be parents who need much more involvement in the program to show change in their knowledge and reported behaviors. They are often likely to be parents experiencing greater stresses in their lives than other parents. The parents who showed little or no change with "moderate to high knowledge, developmentally appropriate descriptors" may function as potential resources to stimulate the thinking of parents who have "further to go" in their knowledge of children and child development as they are integrated together in parent groups. These data highlight the value of a program based on universal eligibility and access where parents at many levels of knowledge are "mixed together" in activities designed to enhance their knowledge and skills as parents. Also, the parents showing moderate to high levels of knowledge and no change may be developing deeper understanding, changing actual behaviors, and gaining support from others in ways not experienced prior to program participation. As with the entire group of responses, further insights into the meaning of these two categories of "no change" responses are evident in the detailed discussion which follows.

Table 4

Number and Percent of "Low Knowledge" and "Moderate to High Knowledge" "No Change" Responses by Question in Group of 156 Parents

QUESTION	NO CHANGE				TOTAL	
	LOW KNOWLEDGE		MODERATE TO HIGH KNOWLEDGE		#	%
	#	%	#	%		
(1) Tell me a little about your child. What is your child like? (2) Okay, your child is __ years old. What are __ year olds like?	36	11.0	186	57.0	222	68.0
(7a) What do you think you do well as a parent?	8	5.0	78	48.4	86	53.4
(5) How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do? (5a) Have your approaches in getting your child to do things changed in any ways in the last few months?	18	12.0	37	25.0	55	37.0
(6) What do you do when your child is angry?	1	0.8	43	35.8	44	36.6
(7b) What do you not do so well as a parent?	27	19.1	19	13.5	46	32.6
(3) What do you and your child enjoy doing together? (3a) Has the way you spend time together changed in any way in the last few months?	4	2.4	18	10.8	22	13.2
(4b) What do you do when you don't feel so loving? (4c) Has the way you express feelings to your child changed in any way in the last few months?	36	22.0	9	5.0	45	27.0

Questions One and Two

Focus: Knowledge of Child Development

Preprogram and Postprogram Questions (same for both):

1. Tell me a little about your child. What is your child like? (Probe, if needed: What are some of the things your child is doing these days?)
2. Okay, your child is _____ years old. What are _____ year olds like? (Probe, if needed: What stands out to you about _____ year olds?)

Questions one and two were intended to provide a sense of the parents' level of knowledge regarding child development. This knowledge was expected to be found either imbedded within their descriptions of their own children in question one or more directly in their descriptions of age-specific behavior in question two.

Parent responses to these two questions were coded as either:

- A. No pre-post change: Low knowledge level, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors
- B. No pre-post change: Moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors
- C. Pre-post change in knowledge

A total of 325 parent responses to these two questions were coded. Of these responses:

- 36 (11%) showed low knowledge, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors, and no change;
- 186 (57%) showed moderate to high knowledge, developmentally appropriate descriptors, and no change; and
- 103 (32%) showed change in knowledge.

The following are examples of parent statements in the two pre-post no change categories:

- A. No pre-post change: Low knowledge level, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors:

Pre: Explores, loves, feels.

Post: Exploring, funny to watch.

Pre: Two years old. Mind of her own.

Post: Stubborn, wants to try and do things her way.

Pre: She's a real easy going child. She has been from the time she was born. She slept all night the first night we brought her home from the hospital. She has occasional temper tantrums, but I don't think it's a problem. She's also stubborn in some ways. Like she's

refusing to learn her colors, she's refusing to be potty trained, so she's stubborn, but she's agreeable stubborn kind of.

Post: She is three years and two months. She is our most independent child. We kind of think of her as the odd one out. She plays real well by herself. She will often go off and find a toy and make up stories about it and yahp to it and play alone. She also seems off the wall imagination. She'll come up with the goofiest stuff out of nowhere. She'll say something at the dinner table, and Steve and I are like "where did she get that from?" She's got a real active imagination and she seems real clever and smart. She's got a real stubborn streak. She is refusing to be potty trained, and it appears to us that it's Shirley's stubbornness. We've come at it from a couple of angles, and she's just refusing. She takes a long time on learning stuff. I don't understand. She's interested. She knows her colors now, but she showed no interest in it at an early age. She's not interested in learning her letters. That kind of stuff just doesn't interest her. She throws occasional temper tantrums, but they're usually short-lived. She's cheerful, she's picky about eating, but she's generally a cheerful and real fun child.

Pre: He can be a little stinker at times. We have a little trouble maker, always looking for something to get into. That's another thing, he's selfish.

Post: He likes to be independent and let himself in and out of the house by himself, and he's talking an awful lot more. He's got his own scooter and rides it around the yahrd. When I get him for the weekend he's hell on wheels and just a little stinker. He's just normal.

These examples of a low level of knowledge and no change moved from vague, unclear descriptors which may or may not be developmentally appropriate in the first two examples to more explicit examples of developmentally inappropriate statements in the third and fourth example. The third example included some apparently developmentally appropriate comments along with those that were inappropriate, and the fourth example showed some movement to a beginning understanding of language development and growth in independence at the same time developmentally inappropriate statements continued to be used.

B. No pre-post change: Moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors:

Pre: I don't know, her name is Kelly, and she's six months old, and I don't know, she's real demanding. I don't know, she's starting to want mom more. I don't know, she's crawling and getting up on things.

Post: Well, she's one years old, and she really likes to read books now, and she, I don't know, she's starting to talk a little bit. I don't know, she's pretty independent. I don't know what else to say. She's walking, and she's kinda talking, and I don't know.

Pre: Four year olds like to -- their whole world is changing. They are going from being totally dependent to being independent. I think it is harder for them.

Post: Brad is almost 5 years old. He is into all these kindergarten readiness things and likes to be with his friends.

Pre: The fact that she really understands everything now. Whatever we say, she understands it. She mimics actions and words, swear words, of course. Getting more and more independent with the word "No." Wants to assert herself, make those decisions.

Post: I don't really know what 2 1/2 year olds are supposed to do, but she changes her mind a lot and she is much more independent. She wants to do things herself, but gets frustrated when she can't or needs help. Loves to read. Spends a lot of time sleeping. Gets cranky when she doesn't get her sleep.

Pre: Busy. I think he's discovering himself and his world (three year old). I think he wants to be out with his own friends and yet he's got to touch home -- touch home base frequently.

Post: Probably just a lot like that. Busy exploring, learning. I think he fits in. He's a typical four year old.

Pre: They're always asking why (four year olds). I've always heard that, but now I'm experiencing it daily. Very curious about things, wondering about all the details about things, not ready to accept pat answers, gaining independence, starting to play with kids on his own, going to birthday parties on his own, testing that independence and yet needing the security of Mom and Dad, always wanting reassurance, exploring. I think it's really an exciting age. They're learning a lot.

Post: Well, they're a little bit more reasonable than the four year old (five year olds). I think they can see more sides of an issue than just their own view of it. They're quite dependable, I'm finding. They're real helpful. He loves to help set the table or get things ready for the next day. Things like that. He's kind of sensitive to other people's feelings and seems to be a better listener than when he was four.

Pre: Next week he'll be four months old. They're just kind of starting to participate more with their environment, become more active with their environment, and Jesse -- I see Jesse doing that. They start to roll, start to reach out to things. Jesse is not rolling yet, but he's lifting legs up and doing the fore runners of rolling. He is holding his head up real well, has good head control. He's just real attentive to things in his environment.

Post: He's eight months. I think they start to interact with their environment a lot more, and they recognize a lot of times -- eight months is when that stranger anxiety comes in. He doesn't have that yet. He goes to anyone, but he does recognize us. I know he does, and he looks to us a lot, even when he's in a crowd and when we're alone with him, too. He'll always look up to us to make sure he knows where we are and everything. So I guess eight months, I think, they're starting to interact a lot more with their environment and real playful. They can do a lot of games, anticipating games with parents or caregivers and just kind of, it's like they're very curious. They have a drive to move and to explore different types of movements, and I think that's what Jesse is doing right now.

As already indicated, the category of "no change, moderate to high knowledge" was the most frequent category of response to these two questions by this group of parents. In these responses, there was great variability in the type and depth of knowledge exhibited within a wide range of developmentally appropriate responses as illustrated in the sequence of example responses listed above. Rather than attempt to categorize each parent's responses to these questions as reflective of either moderate or high levels of knowledge, it seemed more appropriate to characterize all of the responses identified in this category as representative of a continuum of developmentally appropriate responses reflecting gradually

more sophisticated levels of knowledge and understanding of child development. Although the parent responses in this category generally did not reflect qualitatively different levels of knowledge within individuals, they did reflect change in individual parent responses due to the ongoing growth and development of their children. In some cases the quality of the answers appeared to change when the postprogram responses were more extensive and elaborate than the preprogram statements.

About one-third of the coded responses of parents reflected change in knowledge in particular developmental areas such as cognitive, social, or language development or in general knowledge of their children or child development. Examples of change noted are reflected in the sample statements below:

C. Pre-post change in knowledge:

Pre: I believe that -- I don't know. That's kinda why I'm taking the class because I want to find out what they normally are like and what development things should be going on because I really don't know.

Post: He's learning to wave "bye bye," and he's starting to socialize more with other people (11 months old). He dances and tried to say words. More interested in books now and turning pages and doing a lot of exploring around the house. More interested in just sitting and exploring things or walking around and exploring things.

Pre: I don't know. I have never had one before. I am not really around kids that much to know. This is a real new experience for me.

Post: Busy, very busy. Everyday is like a different thing. She will be doing something, like for instance we are planting trees now, and she thinks that is really pretty interesting to go in the woods and see all the different things and do the different things. I guess she is just busy.

Pre: He's happy, very happy. He wakes up in the morning happy, and he'll go to bed happy for us.

Post: Robbie has now developed his own personality, so he's really an outgoing, people person. He's very bouncing. He doesn't sit still for five minutes. He runs all day long, and then he sleeps hard and he plays hard so he's a fun little guy. He's very affectionate, very -- his heart breaks if he's sad, or if he hurts somebody else's feelings, his heart hurts, too. So he's a really neat little guy. We enjoy having him.

Pre: I can't keep up with her. She's pretty active (22 months old).

Post: (Two and one-half year olds are) a handful. They keep you going, that's for sure. It's fun watching her learn everything because everything is so exciting for her, you know. It's fun just watching her learn; watching her do things.

Pre: He's a go-getter. Hard, too. If he doesn't want to do something, it's hard to change his mind. Very pig headed. He likes to help out.

Post: My child is two and one-half, a boy. Very outgoing. Very determined and very much does what he wants to do. He enjoys reading books and telling stories where he has

to tell it. He's kind of outside oriented where he plays with the tractor and talking about how the machinery works out in the field and what goes to what.

Pre: He's very happy, very easy going, and very active.

Post: He's very inquisitive and very interested in how things work. We're kind of marveling at this desire to understand how things work. His buttons and the mechanics behind things have been kind of fun. He's also really getting a command of language which has been real great for all of us. He's just a real happy child. We've been very fortunate. Very persistent though.

Pre: She is kinda passive I think. She is kinda fun to be with and loud at times and likes to get into trouble.

Post: Well, she's very good natured and she's talkative, and she's very energetic. I guess those are words that I would use to describe Jessica.

In these examples, parents either seemed to have little or no knowledge of their children or what children their children's age were like, or they used very general, vague descriptors of their children or children of a particular age in their preprogram responses. In contrast, their postprogram responses reflected increased knowledge about their children and children their children's age.

A final example of a response to these two questions regarding knowledge of child development reflects the main theme that was evident in this entire category of responses: Changes in knowledge of child development reflected in the responses of this sample of parents were more changes in quality and depth of knowledge and understanding rather than changes from misinformation to accurate information.

Pre: A little bit more independent (18 months old). Really amazing how much they can do. Try to use different things. Play with things. He loves water and to be outside. They play more with kids and people, toys and things around. They don't like to go to bed. They like to go to bed with Mom and Dad. They want everything all their own.

Post: They are really fun (two year olds). They are more independent, but they are still attached to you, and you are still important to them. All their values, they get them from you. You feel like you are really important in their lives. Separation is difficult. It is more difficult than before, I think, because they know who is who. They can eat by themselves now. And so we start potty training at this age. I'm going to start with Greg this summer. Less clothes and the shorts are easier to pull down. They use more vocabulary or words and can make sentences -- two or three word sentences. They love paint and everything with their hands and still use the mouth for a lot of tasting and to get knowledge of things. They love to get in costumes, to get dressed up and use a lot of belts and other things. They play more like theater. They do a lot of pretend. They put a lot of reality in their games. When they get together with two year olds, they don't play as a team. Everybody plays his own game, and they communicate and laugh. Very selfish age. They throw temper tantrums, more than before. They need more "time out" and rewards, maybe. They are really cute at this age.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the responses to these questions:

- About one-third of the responses to this question reflected some change in knowledge -- from little or no knowledge or misunderstandings of child development and behavior to developmentally appropriate knowledge and understandings. Programs clearly are serving individuals for whom basic knowledge in child development is essential.
- A small portion (11%) of the parent responses reflected low level knowledge or vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors and no change from preprogram to postprogram interview responses. However, some shifts in understanding were evident in some of the responses in this category. These findings suggest the need for more long-term involvement of parents in programs.
- Most of the responses to these questions reflected no change and moderate to high knowledge levels. Again, some shifts in the quality and depth of knowledge were evident in many of these responses. Postprogram answers were often more expansive, comprehensive, and complex, reflecting deeper understanding of child development. For parents coming to programs who do have some moderate to high knowledge of child development when they enter, they can build upon and expand their understandings for use in diverse situations with their children. As parents do this, they are likely to learn how to more effectively apply this knowledge, incorporating it into behavior better "tuned in" to their children. The incorporation of knowledge of child development into parent classes in Early Childhood Family Education is not meant to be an end in itself, but rather a means to more effective parent-child interaction and relationships.

These findings regarding the knowledge of parents involved in programs confirms that not all parents are at the same place in their level of knowledge. Some do not have a strong knowledge base. For them knowledge needs to be built into their regular class experiences. The same is true for all parents as they work with the knowledge they have for development of deeper understandings and more effective applications to everyday parenting situations.

Question Three

Focus: Parent-child interaction activities and behaviors

Preprogram Question:

3. What do you and your child enjoy doing together?

Post program Question:

3. What do you and your child enjoy doing together?

a. Has the way you spend time together changed in any way in the last few months?

Question three was intended to elicit responses that illustrate parent understanding of developmentally appropriate activities for their children as well as behaviors used by parents during parent-child interaction.

Parent responses to this question were coded as either:

- A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low knowledge level, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors
- B. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors
- C. (1) Change in behavior selection/choice: Increased variety of activities
- C. (2) Change in behavior selection/choice: Due to development of child
- D. (1) Change in quantity of behavior: More
- D. (2) Change in quantity of behavior: Less
- E. Change in quality of behavior

A total of 167 parent responses to this question were coded. Of these responses:

- 4 (2.4%) showed no change, low knowledge or were vague or developmentally inappropriate and
- 18 (10.8%) showed no change, moderate to high knowledge and were developmentally appropriate.

Among the 145 (86.8%) responses reflecting change:

- 34 (20.3%) showed increased variety in the activities selected,
- 56 (33.5%) showed change in behavior selected due to the development of child,
- 19 (11.4%) showed an increase in the quantity of activities due to child maturation,
- 14 (8.4%) showed a decrease in the quantity of activities due to child maturation and circumstances such as a new baby in the family or parent employment or divorce, and
- 22 (13.2%) showed qualitative change in parent behavior.

Examples of each type of response follow.

A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low knowledge level or developmentally inappropriate descriptors:

Pre: Just talking to each other, cuddling. She has trouble sleeping on her own now so I have to hold her, and as soon as I put her down, she'll wake right up again.

Post: Everything, basically everything. (Change question response): I don't think so. We just go everywhere together, do everything together. It's always been that way, and if there's any changes, I wouldn't have noticed them, just gradual.

B. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors:

Pre: We like to paint. We paint together, color, read books, play ball.

Post: Read. He likes to read books together, play games. We build, play with blocks and things together. (Change question response): No, I don't think so.

As with responses to questions one and two, the "no change, developmentally appropriate descriptors" category ranged on a continuum reflecting moderate to high knowledge and degrees of depth of understanding of parent behavior choices.

C. (1) Change in behavior selection/choice: Increased variety of activities:

Pre: Playing outside, swinging, sliding, especially coloring. She loves doing dishes with Mom, standing up on a drawer and watching me do dishes. Coloring and drawing is her favorite and going to the grocery store and riding in the cart.

Post: Playing outside. She likes mommy to swing her. She likes when Daddy comes home. She likes to ride on the riding lawn mower, anything having to do with outside. When she is in the house, she likes to be involved with things that Mommy does as far as cleaning. Just anything, she likes to be with her Mommy and Daddy, helping out her Mommy and Daddy. (Change question response): It has because coming to these child-parent classes has given me more ideas as far as what you do at home with her. When I first came I had never introduced play dough to her. She never really colored or painted or anything like that, and now she is doing that at home and she loves it.

C. (2) Change in behavior selection/choice: Due to development of child:

Pre: Let's see. What do we enjoy doing together? Oh, taking walks in the stroller and having a play time. Kinda where either I or his dad lay on our back and kinda swing him up in the air and get him to giggle and laugh and coo and reading to him. And I like our time together when he is nursing.

Post: Let's see. We like to read books. We like to go outside and go on the swings and just having him walk around outside. Like to sing songs together and -- oh, stroller riding. He still likes that. He likes to stroller ride, and now -- I've just started going on the bike with him. He likes that, but he doesn't want to wear his helmet. So we can only go down the block and back. We can't go on the main road. (Change question response): What has changed in the last few months? I guess he's getting more independent, and he wants to spend time with his toys or just practicing his walking around the house and looking out the window, and I guess he's just more independent now which is better for me.

Pre: All sorts of things I guess. She loves to be read to and that is fun. Usually before both of her naps -- she takes two naps a day -- we sit in her room and read some books. It is a fun, special, quiet time for me with her. She likes to turn the pages now. She seems to really enjoy being read to. If I don't read long enough, she lets me know. I guess just getting down on the floor and playing. She likes to be surprised, so any little games I can invent that surprise her give her the giggles. It is fun for me to make her laugh. She likes to go for walks, too. She loves to be outside, so anything we can do outside she really enjoys.

Post: This week it has been being outside constantly. All she wants to do is be outside. She likes to run around outside. She likes to swing and likes to go for walks. We also like to read books. We try to read together everyday. (Change question response): A little bit with the fact that she is a little more independent. She will let me work in the kitchen, and she will just sit on the floor and play. She wants to be close to me, but I don't necessarily have to be doing things with her. I can do my own activities a little bit more.

D. (1) Change in quantity of behavior: More activities due to child maturation:

Pre: Well, we like reading. She will sit down on my lap for a few minutes each day, and we will read a book. She likes peek-a-boo, and then gets into clapping. She loves to take a bath. She really seems to enjoy it.

Post: We enjoy reading and going outside and playing with her ball and just running around outside and playing with her stuffed animals. She loves her stuffed animals. She likes to help out in the kitchen. When I am baking and stuff, she likes to make a mess. She is a busy helper. (Change question response): I think so. I think before when she was younger, she didn't participate much in what we did. Now she is pretty much an active participant in everything we do. She wants to know everything that is going on.

D. (2) Change in quantity of behavior: Fewer activities due to child maturation and circumstances such as a new baby in the family or parent employment or divorce:

Pre: Michael likes me to read stories with him. Play Legos with him. He likes it when I go to the park with him, when we play at the park. Michael likes to snuggle. Michael and I have found a new independence with being together again, just him and I during the day so we just like to go. Yesterday we went out for lunch and doing a few of those kinds of things. It will be kinda nice.

Post: Reading. Michael likes to be read to a lot. We just sit and read the same book over and over again. (Change question response): Yes, some. He plays with friends more now. He has them over, so he interacts with them more instead of just me.

E. Change in quality of behavior:

Pre: He likes to wrestle at night with his dad. He likes to jump on the pillows. He doesn't really like any calm activities yet. No quiet time. He'll sit down with a book every once in a while, and he'll turn the pages, and you can point out some things while he's turning the pages. Mostly he likes physical activities like playing outside and swinging. He likes to push his lawn mower, and he likes to run and kick a ball and throw balls. Real physical activities.

Post: Like specific activities? We like to, as a family we go for a lot of walks, go to the park, go up and down the slide continuously. He likes to watch videos, and he likes to have us watch them with him, like Sesame Street singing songs. He likes to play with the big Legos, the Duplo blocks, the waffle blocks. He doesn't like to play with a lot of toys. He likes to do more active things. He likes to go outside now that it's warmer, and he has

a little bat like and a sponge ball that he likes to have us put on a tee. He likes to hit that. He likes to swing. Mostly outdoor things. He likes to run around. He's full of energy. (Change question response): Yes. Before we started classes, we did more, "Let's do this, Sam, do you want to do this or that?" Now we wait for him to initiate the activity. That's changed a lot. We wait and see what he wants to play with and what he brings up, and we follow his lead.

Most of the qualitative changes noted focused on the issue of parents letting their children take the lead in play. Other qualitative changes identified included changes in the quality of communication between parents and children and increased quality of understanding of other facets of parent-child interaction which led to greater patience in and better handling of interaction situations.

The majority of responses (86.8%) to question three reflected changes in activities selected by the parents and/or children or changes in parent interaction behaviors. Many of these changes were due to developmental changes in the children over the period of time from the preprogram to the postprogram interview. These changes reflected parent awareness and understanding of developmental changes and the relationship between these and developmentally appropriate interaction activities and the behaviors used by parents in these activities.

Question Four

Focus: Strategies of parent-child interaction/parent behavior

Preprogram Questions:

4. We know there are times when most parents feel really full of love for a child and other times when they don't feel so loving.
- a. What do you do when you want to show your child love?
 - b. What do you do when you don't feel so loving?

Postprogram Questions:

4. We know there are times when most parents feel really full of love for a child and other times when they don't feel so loving.
- a. What do you do when you want to show your child love?
 - b. What do you do when you don't feel so loving?
 - c. Has the way you express feelings to your child changed in any ways in the last few months?

These questions were intended to identify the types of behaviors parents engaged in when they felt love or not so loving toward their children and to reveal any changes in these behaviors during the period of program participation. The coding of responses to part a was different than that of parts b and c.

Parent responses to part a (What do you do when you want to show your child love?) were coded as either:

- A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice
- B. Change in behavior selection/choice

A total of 173 parent responses to this first part of question four were coded. Of these responses

- 79 (45.7%) showed no change in behavior selection/choice and
- 94 (54.3%) showed change in parent behavior selection/choice.

The coding categories were reduced for this question because responses were quite similar within the two broad categories of "no change" and "change." Within the "no change in behavior selection/choice" category, only three responses showed low knowledge and/or developmentally inappropriate descriptors. The other 76 coded "no change" responses reflected moderate to high knowledge and developmentally appropriate behavior descriptors. The changes in behavior reflected in response to this question consisted of starting new behaviors, expanding on behaviors already being used, and some qualitative differences in behaviors. Since these distinctions did not fall into three neat, separate categories, it was more appropriate to view the changes as either new or continuing behaviors reflecting both change in quantity and quality of parent behavior.

Examples of "no change" and "change" responses are listed below.

A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice:

Pre: I hug him, squeeze him and kiss him and whisper things in his ears, sing him songs and hold him before I put him to bed, rock him, kiss his neck and tummy.

Post: Give him hugs and kisses. Sing songs and read him stories and show affection.

Pre: Oh, I praise him and tell him what a good boy he's been all day. I always hug him or we sit in the rocking chair, and I just talk to him and tell him what he was like when he was a little baby and how we used to love him and hold him and that kind of thing.

Post: Oh, we just talk a lot and just play together, hug each other. He's into now a stage how where he says, "Oh, mom needs some hugs and kisses." So he'll come and say, "How about a kiss, how about some hugs?" He likes to do that.

Pre: Spend some quality time. Turn the TV off. Get rid of the distractions. Just one-on-one, reading a story, going to the park, doing something that he likes to do, maybe not what I like to do.

Post: Lots of hugs, kisses. Spend time together. Sitting next to him. Tucking in bed and stay there for a while. Say prayers. Just be together.

B. Change in behavior selection/choice:

Pre: Lots of hugs and kisses, holding her, talk to her in a different way.

Post: Give her a little extra attention. Ask her to read a book because she really likes to do that. Always the hugs.

Pre: Oh, hold and hug and kiss her.

Post: I hug and kiss her and tell her I love her. I let her do things with me.

Pre: I pick him up and hug him and sing to him. I like to just talk to him and be with him.

Post: I guess I just try and do things that make him happy and doing what he wants. If he wants to go outside, I know that will make him happy. If he wants me to read to him, I will read to him. Just being with him and doing what he likes, that will show that I love him.

Pre: I don't know. I hug her, and I kiss her, and I laugh with her, and I talk to her, just the basic affection.

Post: I show affection by hugging her and kissing her and telling her I love her and just spending a lot of time with her just like one-on-one where we go for walks or we'll read together where it's just us, and you know, so it's not involving a lot more. It's just one-on-one.

Pre: I give him hugs, hold him, rub his back, talk to him, let him know how much I care about him, spend quiet time together.

Post: Well, I give him hugs and tell him how much I love him and how special he is. Listen to him. Make him feel like what he has to say is important. I guess that's what I do.

It is evident in these examples and in all of the responses to this question that most responses, whether reflecting change or no change, fell within five broad categories of behavior:

- Giving physical expressions
- Giving verbal expressions, telling "I love you"
- Giving verbal and tangible rewards or treats including buying things for children
- Doing something special together, spending time together
- Listening

The physical expression of giving hugs and kisses was by far the most predominant response in all responses to question 4a.

The responses to this question raise issues regarding the kinds of physical expressions most appropriate to give children to show them love, the timing of these physical expressions, and the manner in which they are given. If these physical expressions are given in a manner not respectful of children's needs and during moments when children are giving cues to parents that such physical expressions are not desired, they may be more intrusive than supportive for children. The following are examples of potentially intrusive

physical expressions of love included in the responses to this question that support the need to raise this issue.

Pre: Um (laugh). She has chapped cheeks because she's kissed so much.

Post: That poor kid. I'm surprised I haven't squashed her cause I squeeze her all the time.

Pre: Oh, I guess I cuddle him, and I play with him. I tell him that I love him a lot. I kiss him. I kiss him all the time. I was told that I kiss babies, and I guess I do. I love to kiss them. He knows how to kiss already because we used to do that "kiss, kiss, kiss Mommy."

Post: I cuddle him up, grab him and kiss him up. I'm a real kisser. I love to kiss. So I kiss him all the time. We snuggle. He doesn't like to snuggle unless he wants to. It's hard for me to grab him up, but he'll let me do it for a second or two. Or I'll give him a bath because he loves his baths.

The parent in the following example reflected this concern and indicated that the program was addressing it.

Pre: Oh, we have, well my husband and I and her like to have group hugs. Or squeeze her. Let her know that she's a really important person. And like this morning, she was talking with her dad before he went to work about her kitty, and she said her kitty loves her so much because she's beautiful and wonderful, and I think its' nice that a two year old can think that of herself. Life can get hard enough later on.

Post: Oh, well, we talk a lot. We hug. One of the things that this year I taught her a little bit or that we concentrate on a little bit cause we have a member of the family we're concerned about is how to say that we don't wanna be touched right now. So while I'm real physically affectionate with her and hug her and kiss her and stuff, now she tells me when she wants me to get my hands off her. I think it's just an exercise of power to see if it really works, and I allow it to work cause I feel that she needs to believe that it works to use it successfully with other people, too. So we hug and kiss and talk and do things like that, but I also respect when she doesn't want to be hugged and kissed, too, now, whereas we didn't have that before we started the program about a year ago.

Others issues raised by this question and responses to it included:

- How do children's temperament and changes in development affect the way parents show love to their children?
- Do we need to go beyond hugs and kisses by teaching other ways to express love that are sensitive to children's needs and cues?

Parent responses to parts b (What do you do when you don't feel so loving?) and c (Has the way you express feelings to your child changed in any ways in the last few months?) were coded as either:

- A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low knowledge level, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors
- B. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Moderate to high knowledge level,

developmentally appropriate descriptors

C. Change in behavior selection/choice

A total of 165 responses to these questions were coded. Of these responses:

- 45 (27%) showed no change and
- 120 (73%) showed change.

Change was clearly evident in the majority of the responses to these questions.

Among the "no change" responses, most of them (36) reflected a low knowledge level and vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors. Only 9 of the "no change" responses reflected moderate to high knowledge and developmentally appropriate descriptors.

Examples of both follow.

A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low knowledge level, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors:

Pre: Try to go away.

Post: Go away. (Change questions response): No.

Pre: Tell him I need time by myself right now.

Post: Just tell him I need some time by myself. I need time to think. I just tell him I want to be alone. Just go play. (Change question response): Not really.

Pre: I try to put myself away from him. I tend to lose my patience, and I try not to let that rub off on him when he's not really doing anything wrong. I just get kind of frustrated when I can't get things done, so when his father's home I give him to him for a while. Just try to be away from him.

Post: I try to kinda put myself away from him. I like to get some time away from him. I get very impatient some times. (Change question response): No, I really wouldn't say I have.

Pre: Holler at her, "Clean that room up now," or this or that.

Post: Avoid her. Don't hug her. Don't kiss her. When she's done something wrong, she'll be disciplined. (Change questions response): No, not that I can think of.

Pre: He gets put on the stair steps. I make sure the light is on. I had a fear of dark when I was small. Kind of a "time out." We find it works better than a chair. Sit on stair steps with the door closed.

Post: You mean punishment? We use the stair steps. That's our "time out." Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. (Change question response): It's not as easy to hug him or get close to him cause he tends to push you away. I have to almost bribe him to get him to hug. When he particularly wants something, I'll ask for a hug first. I think that's part of his more independence. He just kinda pushes you away.

Pre: I try to give her to someone else so I won't be mean to her.

Post: I still try to hug. I try real hard. (Change question response): I don't think so.

Pre: Because he is so young, I discipline him a little bit differently. I guess the thing we do the most is "time out" in a chair. I put his chair in a corner, set the timer on the microwave, and he does sit there. When the time is done he gets down. I have tried a variety of things. He has had a few swats on his rear, although this is quite infrequent. It is very infrequent, and when I do I say, "One, two," and that's it. But my biggest thing, he is going through this screaming thing, and I have tried just about everything with that, with spanking, with "time out" in a chair, to trying to tell him that Mommy's ears hurt. You know, I even tried Tabasco sauce on his tongue. I think he will grow out of it. I don't know how much control he has over it to tell you the truth.

Post: Probably glare at him. I do a lot with my eyes to let him know, "Stop it! I am not happy with that behavior." I give him the look. I might verbally say something: "That hurts my feelings when you do that." "Brandon, Mommy's angry." I probably give him the look and then tell him I am unhappy. I will smack his hands when he is throwing something or hitting or kicking the dog or something.

Pre: I feel sometimes like I ignore her. I'll get busy and want her to go away. If she's been naughty, she has to sit in her room.

Post: Um, if she's being naughty, I send her to her room, or if she does something really bad, I might give her a spank, but usually I just ignore her.

(Change question response): I don't think so.

These "no change" examples at an apparently low knowledge level reflect the fact that some parents involved in programs come into them with relatively little knowledge and understanding of children's behavior and are likely to need more time participating in the programs to make changes in their behaviors. These findings indicate a need for more long-term involvement in programs, at least for some parents. The areas of behavior change likely to be addressed when considering what parents do when they do not feel so loving toward their children may also be areas where change is slow and difficult. This group of parents appeared to still be struggling with changes in these areas.

B. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors:

As indicated, only nine parents made statements reflecting no change and moderate to high levels of knowledge. For example, one of these parents stated:

Pre: When we don't feel so loving, I think that's the time when I will say, "Okay, Ben, let's you sit down here and read this book," and I will go in another room and do something and then go in a few minutes later and say, if he's done something wrong, "Let's talk about it," and try to discuss what's happened and what happened that made me not to feel so loving toward him and always end that time with, "I do love you. Mommy loves you very much, and Daddy loves you." But I think that's just, we have the good times and the bad times, and he realizes that. I think there are times that he doesn't love Mommy, too, so it's probably typical.

Post: Those are the times when, just last week, when I would ask him to get in his room in his chair, and he knew that he had done something that was wrong, and he knew that Mom was not real happy with what he did. But after a couple minutes on the chair and me not

being there, physically standing there, then he would come in and said he was sorry and we'd talk about it. So I think for us that the times when we are frustrated and don't feel that kind of love towards him is when we ask him to go in his room and sit down in his chair, and I'll go into the other room. Sometimes we just need some time to ourselves.

C. Change in behavior selection/choice:

For the majority of parents interviewed, much change was evident in their responses to this question indicating that this is an area of behavior in which change is quite possible during involvement of one year in a program. For example:

Pre: Probably yell at him. Tell him I'm mad.

Post: Tell him Mom ain't feeling very good and maybe he should go play in his room for a while and be kinda quiet. (Change question response): I explain more. "We need a break. Grant needs a break. Mom needs a break. Let's have a drink, sit down and take a break."

Pre: Tell her she's naughty. Once in a while her fingers are spanked. She sits in her chair.

Post: Give her to Grandpa. That's what I did the other day. When I give her to someone else, we are both better for it.

Pre: I tell him to just leave me alone right now and give me some time to myself. Or else I just say, "Let me alone for awhile." I go for a walk, go outside.

Post: Sometimes I go in my room and talk to myself for a little while. (Change question response): I think so. It's given me the ability to say my feelings more to him. I've always been one to do that, but it's helped me to get the right words to say to him -- to express it to him better so he understands it in four year old terms.

Pre: Usually I say, "Leave Mommy alone. She's in a bad mood. Also try to go into another room.

Post: Lot of the time I'll say that Mommy's tired and crabby. It depends on what the situation is. If he's doing something that's making me mad, then I don't feel quite so loving. Sometimes I get mad, and I yell. Other times I just turn my back and just try to ignore it. (Change response question): Yes, I try to sit down and explain myself to them more often. And instead of just jumping the gun -- it's like the class is helping me open up my eyes to just the way I was brought up, you know, when you did something wrong, you just got yelled at. It just really helped me.

Pre: We have raised our voices probably more than we should. We have been involved with spanking her as a disciplinary situation. We started out originally having a "time out." It got to a point in some instances where she tested us to a point where she watches us and we told her not to do it. She just kept watching us. She did it and then she said, "I'll go have my 'time out' now." Then we sometimes count to three, and if she doesn't do that, we let her know she'll get a spanking, and we count to three. Normally that is the situation. We try to explain to her why she is doing what she is not supposed to be doing. She is supposed to obey us and cooperate.

Post: Well, there's those things, too. We still let her know with words. I think we've tried to since the class began -- how to better address the situation, although I feel personally that there is still a need to be disciplined and yet there's a different way of disciplining. Being stern and being firm without yelling. But I know both my wife and I share this philosophy. We definitely want Alicia to grow up in a stricter environment and

the parents rule. And she's supposed to learn how to obey one way or the other. But with the class we have learned to be better, I guess from the parent's standpoint to be better to hold in our aggression and let it out in a little bit more calm and conservative way instead of taking it out on Alicia.

Pre: That's really a hard question. Most importantly is if you're getting angry or something, stop and not let them see that you're getting mad or you're not in a very good mood right now. I think I try to, and I think I don't want him to pick up on it and try to get him involved in something else and take a few minutes to myself. I guess yelling is something everybody does when they get frustrated, but like I said, it's something you don't want to do a lot of. I think he knows when I'm getting mad and he's pushed too far, and he's starting to learn that, and he'll point his finger and I'll raise my voice and he'll say, "No," and that's when he goes to his bedroom and we take the "time out."

Post: Try not to lose my temper which I have a short fuse and I discover through the years that doesn't work with kids because they lose their's, too. I try to talk with them. That is one thing I learned in the program when the parents were together this year. We talked about discipline a lot, and I got a lot of hints from them. Telling him what he is doing wrong and giving him choices. Which really seems to work, and I have not done this before, and giving him choices does work, especially now when he can understand that. (Change question response): I think I am always pretty open with the love and stuff, but I think feeling of when I am angry and when he is doing something and I want him to stop that. Yes, that has changed, especially when I talk about discipline. I approach it differently, not to lose my temper because that doesn't work. Choices work with all three of my children. Telling them the options, and sometimes it takes them awhile to understand. Be calm and talk it through with them. Most of the time it seems to work.

The following kinds of behavior changes were most evident in all of the change responses to this question including those above:

- Removing themselves or their children from the situation
- Redirecting their children's attention to other activities
- Offering acceptable choices
- Thinking before acting
- Involving another adult
- Talking about, explaining the situation to their children

As with the examples above, many parents were moving in the direction of these types of more developmentally appropriate strategies at the same time they were continuing to report use of some which were less appropriate.

Many responses to this question reflected not only behavior changes, but also changes in understanding of normal developmental expectations for children of various ages which often affected parent perceptions of and interactions with their children. For example:

Pre: You mean as far as discipline. Well, I can be vocal. She knows when I'm displeased with her. We have a Mr. Spoon, like for discipline. I don't like to use my hand, but I will

if that's all there is. "Time outs." Mainly she can tell I'm disappointed just by the tone of my voice. I try to use that.

Post: My biggest thing is I tend to blow up. And so I'm working on trying not to, trying to understand where they're coming from. Basically do a little separation. If she needs a little "time out" on a chair, or if I need to go into a different room to cool down and then talk about it. That doesn't always work, but sometimes. I believe a little swat on the rump, it works in certain situations. They're not for everything of course, but . . .

(Change question response): I've changed more in the angry part. I learned to understand her age, that she's not the only one of the children that are going through -- what she does is typical for her age. Which you know, but it helps when you hear it, well in my case it was weekly, how to solve this problem. She's got a little brother, and I've learned how to deal more with sibling rivalry. Staying out of it as much as you can. You know it's their battle, not yours. And I've just learned to understand more where their emotions are. If they're talking about something scary, well they're just dealing with it outwardly, or if she gets angry, I learned to look at the situation, "Is she frustrated, is she tired?" I just, right now I can understand that this is a three year old.

Pre: I think probably for me I'd be frustrated and maybe not quite as tolerant. Put him in his room for a while, give him some time.

Post: Maybe count to ten, or sometimes I just try to ignore situations. I say ignore some of the behaviors sometimes. Tell him that I don't like that behavior and maybe tell him what he should be doing instead. I guess if I really get upset I put him in "time out." He understands that. (Change question response): Well, I guess that I'm aware of like the developmental stages that he's going through better than I did prior to that. It's kind of good to kind of have that reinforce that, when he's saying "No" a lot now, that's just a part of his developmental stage. His becoming independent and things like that. So I think that's been good for me to kind of reinforce that and to understand that.

Pre: Give her "time out." Just deal with the situation if she needs to be told or disciplined in any way. That she needs to learn that she can't do certain things. To make her loving toward other people.

Post: I let her know sometimes that we don't do that. Like we talk about in class, not putting the child down. We talked about that last time, and we talked about it in class.

(Change question response): I don't know if this exactly answers that, but like I said before, I said she's not eating, she's not doing this and she's bad. And you know, that's the kind of interpretation I would give. And I think after coming here and hearing the other parents and some of the things you can do with them and that it's normal behavior and I just feel that it helped me. And I guess that I used to think that she would tear things up. And we talked about that children like to tear things, and we could give them a magazine to tear and that it doesn't mean she's naughty. And you know you want a perfect room, and I thought my girl was bad. And you know, it really made a difference for me. And I feel that I can take home things that she's, you know, normal and I'm normal. I think that I feel differently inside. I think that I do express that it gives me a better feeling about her. It isn't that I never loved her. I always wanted a little girl. But I think that it has helped me in the class to try some of the things. You don't try to change them and make them to be a certain way. That's just the way they are.

In general, parents gave much more expansive answers to this question during the postprogram interviews than the preprogram interviews, and they appeared to have had opportunities to give thought to the issues addressed by the question by the time of the second interview. Parent responses to the first interview seemed to reflect more reactions

to situations, whereas responses to the second interview appeared to reflect more proactive behaviors by the parents, again reflecting forethought before action with their children.

Why was so much change evident in parent responses regarding how they interacted with their children when they did not feel so loving toward them? Responses indicated the following possible explanations:

- Parents seemed to know more about and better understand their children and child development in general which in turn helped them better interpret and respond to their children's behavior. Some parents now saw developmentally appropriate behavior where before they had seen only misbehavior.
- Parents were learning new ways, new strategies for handling "not so loving" times. They were learning more options and more developmentally appropriate options for responding to these situations.
- Parents were receiving support from the program including the other participating parents which helped diffuse some of their "not so loving" feelings.

Question Five

Focus: Strategies of parent-child interaction/parent behavior

Preprogram Question:

5. How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do? (Optional clarifications, if needed: How do you try to get your child to mind you, or obey you, or do what you want?)

Postprogram Questions:

5. How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do? (Optional clarifications, if needed: How do you try to get your child to mind you, or obey you, or do what you want?)
- a. Have your approaches to getting your child to do things changed in any ways in the last few months?

This question was intended to reveal the types of behaviors parents typically used when they wanted their children to respond to their requests in specific situations or their goals for their children's behavior. Parent responses to this question were coded as either:

- A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low knowledge level, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors
- B. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors
- C. (1) Change in behavior selection/choice: Increase or start doing
- C. (2) Change in behavior selection/choice: Decrease or stop doing

A total of 147 parent responses to this question were coded. Of these responses:

- 55 (37%) reflected "no change" categories and
- 92 (63%) reflected "change" categories.

Among the responses reflecting no change:

- 18 (12%) showed no change, low knowledge or were vague or developmentally inappropriate and
- 37 (25%) showed no change, moderate to high knowledge and were developmentally appropriate.

Among the responses reflecting change:

- 86 (59%) showed an increase in or starting of behaviors and only
- 6 (4%) showed a decrease in or stopping of particular behaviors.

Examples of each type of response follow.

A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low knowledge level, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors:

Pre: I try reasoning first, and if that doesn't work, I usually send her to her room or tell her "No."

Post: I ask her and if she says "No," then either I go do it, or I tell her to go to her room if it's something that she needs to do. Usually I let her out of her room when she'll do whatever it is.

Pre: A lot of times I try and reason with her which doesn't work. I really haven't found anything that works yet.

Post: I guess I try to bribe, and if that doesn't work -- she doesn't always behave.

Pre: Oh, bribe, reward, anything!

Post: Anyway I can. No, not really. I guess I still bribe a lot.

Pre: With the difficult child I start by being nice. After a few times and still no reaction, then I start to yell. And then it's punishment, I guess, cause usually she yells back. It's really hard.

Post: Usually she'll mind me fairly easily. I just have to ask. But if she doesn't, I just raise my voice and most of the time she'll just do it. (Change question response): Like I say, I think I'm thinking more about what I'm doing more. I think I'm more mellow. I think the biggest thing about coming to these classes is knowing that other people have the same problems. And knowing that you're not the only one that yells. I was just talking to my neighbor about the classes and that we were asked what our biggest problem is, and everyone says that they yell too much. So I thought, "Oh, I'm not the only one that yells." Because my husband gives me that, too, "You yell too much." And really I don't think I yell all that much but he keeps telling me I do. And it's really nice to know that other people do that.

As with responses to other questions that fell into the "low knowledge level, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors" category, the need for weekly, ongoing classes

for many parents was clearly evident. The last parent's response above reflects benefits from support from other parents in the class and yet a need for much more knowledge and support to help her with the daily challenges she faced.

B. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors:

Pre: I have to be persistent. If I want him to pick up toys, I have to help him, take his hand and actually help him, and he will then do it.

Post: If he doesn't want to listen, I just take him by the hand, bring him over. Like if I want him to pick up his toys, I'll just take him by the hand, pick up the toy and put it back in the bag or whatever. So I just reinforce it.

Pre: I read his mind. Try to look at it from his point of view and see, try to think what he's thinking.

Post: That's hard. I try to look at it from his point of view and figure out what he's thinking and how I can get that into play.

Pre: Repetition -- verbal and showing.

Post: Repeating it a lot. First showing her and then repeat it, no matter how long it takes.

Pre: I guess I try to talk at his level. If he's sitting on the floor and picking up Legos, I get down on the floor and say, "Michael, we have to go and start picking up Legos." I try to be at his level and maybe I start helping him pick up, or I try to be an example of what I want him to do. I say, "It's time to get ready for bed." I try to go up and get him to get his pajamas out and that kind of thing.

Post: I try to do it with him. Like if it's time to get pajamas on, I'll say, "Let's go together." Just show him how to do it, teach him to go to his drawer and get them out and take his clothes off. (Change question response): I guess I started using that approach more, teaching him and showing him instead of just expecting him to know how to do it.

As is evident in the examples above, a common theme in the low knowledge examples was the use of bribery; and common themes among the moderate to high knowledge responses were use of methods involving showing, explaining, repetition of showing and explaining, giving choices, being at their children's level and seeing their children's point of view, and making a game of a request.

C. (1) Change in behavior selection/choice: Increase or start doing:

Most of the responses to this question which reflected change in the way parents tried to get their children to do what they wanted them to do fell into the following categories:

- Showing or modeling what to do
- Reasoning, explaining the situation
- Repeating modeling and verbal explanations
- Giving children choices

- Making a game of the situation
- Being patient with and sensitive to children through increased understanding of children's needs and point of view

It is clear from all of the responses in this category that, during the time they participated in the program, these parents had developed a larger repertoire of interaction strategies for getting their children to do what they wanted them to do that were developmentally appropriate as well as more awareness of what behaviors were not developmentally appropriate. The examples below reflect the kinds of change listed above and the increased array of techniques apparently available to parents.

Pre: I guess it depends. If there's a choice in the matter I'll -- "Do you want to do this now or later?" and sometimes there is no choice. Day care -- sometimes he doesn't want to go, but there's not a choice. Then I try to give him the freedom, "Should we get dressed now or should we wait until later?" "Do you want to have lunch now or skip it altogether?" I try to give him options and things that he can choose. There's some things that he knows there's no decision.

Post: Some with modeling. I'm trying to think. I'll start with asking. He's pretty cooperative, though. And if he's not sometimes, if you have an explanation of why this needs to be done and why this needs to be done now. (Change question response): I think I've got more patience with him. Being more understanding that kids don't think on the same level that we do. I think we do try to explain a little more rather than be so demanding.

Pre: Well, I show him what I want him to do. First I'll ask him to do it, then I'll show him. And then if he has a fit and doesn't want to do it, then he can throw a big fit. I'll put him in his bedroom for five minutes and then get him out, and it just changes him.

Post: By using "time out." That's the biggest thing. Or giving him choices. Saying that you either do this or that if he's doing something he doesn't want to quit doing. Like if he has to come eat or whatever. I'll say to him to come eat first and then he can go back to whatever he was doing. (Change question response): A lot. Just by learning how to give him choices. More reasoning. I guess, understanding, too.

Pre: I try to do it myself, show him how it's done. I try to repeat the routine. I give him verbal directions.

Post: I guess as he grows up I'm learning to be a little more easy going with him and not to let things he does bother me so much. Things that I know are typical or normal for him to do that might upset me I try to not get so upset about it. I try to, hopefully, take a humorous look at things he does that might not be so humorous. Something what works for John is to do things in a positive manner -- don't get impatient with him. If he senses that, he'll just do the opposite. But if I do things and try to make it fun, something that might not be so fun, make it a game, he seems to like it.

Pre: I usually tell her and sometimes that works. Sometimes it doesn't. Basically, if we do it together, it goes better.

Post: I try to let her have choices about how she can help. (Change question response): The techniques we talked about with how to be aware of each other's feelings, hers and mine has changed. I guess I try to be more broad in what I want her to do so she has more choice.

As with responses to some of the other questions, some of the responses to this question reflected changes in parent behavior in relation to developmental changes in their children. These changes in behavior seemed to follow from a clear understanding of developmental change in children and the need to shift behaviors in response to these developmental changes. For example:

Pre: Get his mind off it. Just coax him in another way. Distract with something else.
Post: Try to explain it so he can understand. (Change question response): Maybe explain a little better because now he can comprehend more.

Pre: I don't. Sometimes it is terrible. To get her to change her diaper, I bribe her. I have a little necklace and say, "Come on honey, we are going to change the diaper." I shook the necklace in front of her, and she came along. Sometimes if you say, "Come on, come on," you know she will come to you.

Post: It depends. If she is in a good mood, she will pretty much listen. She is really good at taking directions when she wants to. Like "Can you pick up your hat?" She is really good about doing things like that. There is no way we can make her do things if she doesn't want to do them. Like walking from the car into the building. I told her to hold my hand, and she wanted to go in the opposite direction. I picked her up and took her along with me and then put her down in a little bit and then she was fine. She gets these bugs in her head. Physically move her if she is going someplace I don't want her to go. (Change question response): They have evolved more. When she was ten months old, she didn't take directions. She did pretty much what she wanted to do. Now that she is understanding more and being more verbal in her communication with us, I think it has just evolved gradually into whereas she takes directions now and before she didn't. It is a learned process that she is grasping.

C. (2) Change in behavior selection/choice: Decrease or stop doing:

A few of the parent responses to this question reflected a reduction in some behaviors such as bribery, yelling, screaming, and spanking. For example:

Pre: It's hard. He is pretty stubborn. If he won't do what I want, then he usually ends up in a chair until he gets ready to start over, or else I can either talk him into it by trying to explain it or something. He's pretty good at doing what I want him to do. There have been a few times, you know, during the day, but otherwise he is pretty good, not too much conflict.

Post: I tell him, and if he doesn't do something when I want him to pick up his toys or something, and he doesn't want to, I will take his hands and help him. I don't really want to spank him and say, "Then go sit in a chair," because that's not getting him to do what I want him to do. So I will take his hands and sort of make him pick it up. Then when we are done, if he is mad about it, we will just go in separate directions, but first we do what I say. So I kind of make him, I guess. (Change question response): Yes, it seems like I

used to, if he didn't do something I wanted him to do, I just spanked him and sent him off, but now I think about it more since we have been in class and stuff. You know, you go to class every week, so you get more reminded to use other ways and stuff, and I just think about it more.

Pre: Well, sometimes I use "1, 2, 3." Like I want her to come, "1, 2," and if she doesn't at least start coming by "3," then she knows I have to come and get her. Sometimes just "please" will work with her. Or if worse comes to worse, it might be a bribe. Like if you do this, I'll do this. If she says "No, then I'll ask "You want to take a bath?" She loves bath time. "Well, then you have to do this." Or she likes gum. Sometimes it's a bribe. Sometimes I just have to physically pick her up if she won't do what I'd like her to do. Sometimes I just physically have to make her do it.

Post: I always try to talk. You can only pull and push them so far. And that doesn't get you anywhere. Lately what's been working is if I get mad she says, "Talk nice, Mom, be nice." And so then I turn it back at her. I'll ask her nice first, "Now Mom's asking nice. Do you want me to not ask so nice?" Lot of times switching what she says around, "Mom gets mad when you don't listen. Just listen a minute." A lot of times this little reasoning, twisting around different things, will get her to work, most of the time it will get her to work. I gave up trying to be physical unless it's a danger part. (Change question response): I felt I had to be in control. I had to be the boss. Now I realize I don't have to be the boss. There's a happy medium. Now I'm trying to teach my husband. What I always wished, I wished, husband's could come or had a program where they could get involved. They're not into it as much as moms. I wish he could understand some of the things I talk about.

Both of the above responses have program implications. First, it is clearly beneficial to offer ongoing, weekly classes to support parents in their efforts toward change and to help them think through the behaviors they use in interaction with their children. Secondly, the benefits of the program are likely to increase if fathers can be encouraged to be more involved than many of them now are.

In all categories of response to this question it was evident that parents could benefit from a better understanding of the techniques they used with their children to get them to do what they wanted them to do that they labeled as bribery, threats, consequences, and choices. There seemed to be a great deal of misunderstanding of what these meant in interaction with children. The responses to this question indicated the ongoing need to help parents think about the guidance and discipline strategies they use with their children. The responses also highlighted the value of parent-child interaction as an opportunity to help parents better understand the actual implementation of some of the strategies that are suggested for use in interaction with their children. This is a resource available in programs that probably is not tapped as much as it might be for this purpose. Interaction time may be the best time to help parents understand and learn the skills for being sensitive to, "tuning in" to cues from their children as a way to more effectively support their children's development.

Question Six

Focus: Strategies of parent-child interaction/parent behavior

Preprogram and Postprogram Question (same for both):

6. What do you do when your child is angry?

This question was intended to indicate the types of behaviors parents reported exhibiting when their child became angry. Parent responses to this question were coded as either:

- A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low knowledge level, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors
- B. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors
- C. (1) Change in behavior selection/choice: Increase or start doing
- C. (2) Change in behavior selection/choice: Decrease or stop doing

A total of 120 parent responses to this question were coded. There were fewer coded responses to this question than the other questions because the question did not work well with parents of infants. Consequently, many of the responses to this question from parents of infants were not used. Of the coded responses:

- 44 (36.6%) reflected "no change" categories and
- 76 (63.4%) reflected "change" categories.

Among the responses reflecting no change, only one response showed no change, low knowledge and 43 showed no change, moderate to high knowledge and were developmentally appropriate. Among the responses reflecting change, all but two (74 [61.7%]) showed an increase in or starting of behaviors. The other two responses showed a decrease in or stopping of particular behaviors. Examples of each type of response follow.

- A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low knowledge level, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors:

The only response in this category is listed below. It reflects the need for ongoing, long-term parent participation in the program.

Pre: When she gets mad, she cries. I just put her in her crib and let her cry. My mom says it's good for her so she don't get too spoiled. My cousins are like that. They cry when they get picked up, and they get a bottle or something, and they get whatever they want. They are so spoiled rotten. If they don't get theirs, they will cry. I told myself when I was pregnant, I told my mom, "My kid isn't going to be like this." I said, "I don't want her crying for this or crying for that." So she ain't going to get spoiled. So far she

ain't. She is pretty good. She only cries when she is hungry, wet, tired, and she just wants me to play with her. That is the only time she cries. Or if she just wants to be around people she will cry.

Post: If she cries I will put her in the back bedroom and let her cry because I don't want to spoil her. She already is, but I try to unspoil her. If she cries, I will put her in the back bedroom, and if she cries for no reason, I will just put her in the back bedroom.

B. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors:

Pre: Hold her. Try to get to the bottom of it. Sometimes just let her be angry.

Post: Let her be angry and help her to express her anger.

Pre: He's kinda at the age right now where he can tell us what's wrong. He can kinda explain why he's mad, why he is upset. We go give him a chance to be by himself, seeing, you know, if it will help him to, you know, after we try to talk with him about it. If that doesn't do any good, we let him be alone for a while, by himself either in his room or somewhere, or we leave and somewhere where he's kinda undistracted so he can think about why he's mad. And then we'll ask him again, and see if he can communicate it to us and if he can't, you know, then we start asking the questions and try to get it out of him, and sometimes we can, sometimes we can't. He's just at the age where it's really hard to understand, you know, his needs and his wants and why he reacts to different situations.

Post: I let him yell and scream. I mean it's like I'm not going to make him suppress his feelings, you know. I let him get his feelings out. I let him tell me what's wrong if he does. Sometimes he just sits and whines and kicks his feet. Still temper tantrums at four. If he acts out against other kids, he goes to a "time out" chair, you know, and then after that generally he will talk to me about it a little bit, at least get an idea of what happened, but in the immediate area, you know, if he's endangering anybody else, he's pulled out of the situation and put into the chair until he can calm down.

Pre: I sit him down in a chair and I ask him why or what set him off. "Just settle down. Take a deep breath." And he'll tell me why he's mad or what made him mad or usually ask him, and he'll say why and tell me and talk about it.

Post: If he's angry, he usually just needs a little "time out," so he goes into his room or he just sits in the chair. I make him, I said, "Now just go to your room and think about what you did or think about why you're angry." And then I go in and I ask him, "Okay now, what did you do or what was it that made you so angry?" And if he just has the time away from the situation, usually, he can usually think of a way to resolve it.

Pre: Well, I do a lot of reasoning with her, but that doesn't always work, and it's like if she's doing one thing and I want her to do another, I have to try and make what I want her to do seem fun and interesting. Sometimes I have to let her have her little tantrum and then try to, I usually would get her interested in something else. Get her sidetracked from whatever is upsetting her.

Post: We try to give her time to have her tantrum or whatever. She still throws herself down on the floor sometimes. Just give a chance to cool off and then try to get her interested in something else.

The parent interview responses reflecting "no change, moderate to high knowledge" most commonly included reported parent behaviors of allowing children to express their angry feelings, giving children "time out" or time away from the situation to calm down, taking

time to talk about the situation with children after they have calmed down, and distracting children.

C. (1) Change in behavior selection/choice: Increase or start doing:

The parent responses to this question reflecting change in behavior through increasing specific behaviors and starting to do new ones fell into four broad categories of response that were similar to the types of responses parents made who had moderate to high knowledge and reflected no change in their responses:

- Leave alone, ignore or physically separate children awhile so they can collect their thoughts and regain their composure
- Distract, try to involve children in something else, redirect
- Allow children to be angry, let them express their angry feelings
- Reason, explain situation after children calm down

Responses reflecting parent behaviors which either allowed their children to express their anger or used reasoning and explanations usually included an element of teaching their children self-control skills. Examples of responses reflecting each of these kinds of change follow.

- Leave alone, ignore or physically separate children awhile so they can collect their thoughts and regain their composure:

Pre: I guess it depends on the situation. In some situations he'll understand more and he understands the rules. I guess I basically let him cry and get it out.

Post: I guess usually I try to see what he's upset about or whatever and try to help out that situation. If it's something he wants, I may give it to him or otherwise I won't, and maybe I'll let him cry. Maybe I'll ignore it a little bit. If he's really upset or whatever, maybe I'll put him in "time out" if it's behavior I really don't want. Sometimes I tell him if he's really crying or whatever that he can get down when he stops crying. Pretty soon he's all done. He's better. As he says, "All done, Momma. All done. I'm better. I'm better." And that seems to help.

- Distract, try to involve children in something else, redirect:

Pre: Sometimes I just try to let him play by himself. If he lets me, I try to hold him to calm him. When he gets something taken away from him, he gets pretty angry.

Post: Hug him, try to be more soft spoken with him, remove him from what's making him angry and get him interested in something else, a toy or a book. He's very easy to distract.

- Allow children to be angry, let them express their angry feelings:

Pre: He doesn't get angry a lot. I guess if he is real angry to the point where he is acting out, where he is showing at being naughty, a lot of "time outs," I guess. Sit in a "time out" chair, turn on the timer and have him sit there.

Post: I probably try to share the feelings more with him. One thing I think and one thing I learned in class is with his anger. I learned that I don't have to feel responsible about it all of the time and feel bad about it. So when he is angry, I pretty much allow him to be angry and I don't knock myself out feeling like I am the one responsible for being a terrible parent or whatever. I realize that is part of his life and he will just have to deal with it.

Pre: I try to set him in a place so he can collect his thoughts for a moment and regain his composure. Right now he has a one year old brother that can get him angry when he gets into his things. His first instinct is to lash out or something at him, so I just generally just separate the two and put him in an area by himself.

Post: I try to give him the time that he needs to kind of cool down and let him know that it's okay to have those feelings and sort of explain to him you know, "You seem like you're angry right now. Why is that?" Or help him to identify his feelings, too.

- Reason, explain situation after children calm down:

Pre: He doesn't really show anger.

Post: When he is angry, it depends what it is, what the cause is. If it's not dangerous, I let him cry, and I tell him I hear him. When he has a tantrum, I let him have his tantrum, and when he is finished I deal with it or talk to him. He is now at the stage where he gets frustrated because he doesn't have a skill, so I work every day with him to improve his skills.

Pre: I let her have her fit. I watch her and make sure she's not going to hurt herself. Let her have the fit, and if she hurts herself, then it's her own fault.

Post: When she's having a temper tantrum, which usually means she's angry, I just walk away from her and let her have her tantrum. If she's just mad at Ted or me, I just try to cuddle her and let her know that, "Hey, I don't know what your problem is, but we're going to try and get to the bottom of it," and I'll ask her to tell me a story. In her little language she'll try and tell me what's wrong, and that seems to work.

Pre: I usually leave her alone until she gets over it.

Post: I reflect back on how she's feeling and try to get her to solve the problem, help her work it out.

C. (2) Change in behavior selection/choice: Decrease or stop doing:

Only two parent responses reflected change by decreasing or stopping behavior. These responses reflected a reduction in yelling and hitting. One of these parents stated:

Pre: I try a lot of things. I think my first reaction is to yell back at him. But that just didn't work. I tried to console him and try to ask him what his problem was, but the best thing I found out was to just let him go over in a corner and let him sit there till he's over with it. It happens to be the best choice so far that works out.

Post: First, I yelled at him. Then I realized that it wasn't doing any good. He kept screaming and screaming at me so I just sat and looked at him and he finally got over it, but it was a lot shorter than the time from before a year ago when we did that, and we just kept yelling and yelling back and forth to each other, and it made it worse, so I just looked at him and didn't say a word and so he doesn't have anything to yell back at me for, and that's what I should have done before and I didn't know how to react.

The change responses to this questions over all the parents responding indicated healthier ways of viewing anger and a recognition that "it is okay to be angry." Parents also increased the number of developmentally appropriate approaches they could use to respond to their children's anger.

Question Seven

Focus: Strategies of parent-child interaction/parent behavior

The following transition statement was made between questions six and seven during both the preprogram and postprogram interviews:

Okay, we've been talking a lot about your child and what you do with your child. Now I'd like to ask you to think some about yourself as a parent. We've found that most parents have some things they feel they do well as a parent, and some things they don't feel they do so well.

Preprogram Question:

7. a. What do you think you do well as a parent?
- b. What do you not do so well as a parent?

Postprogram Question:

7. a. What do you think you do well as a parent?
- b. In your interview at the beginning of the program you were asked what you didn't do well as a parent. You said: " _____ " How do you feel about that now?

These questions were intended to identify parents' perceptions of what they did well and not so well in their interactions with their children and to reveal any changes in these perceptions during the period of program participation. The coding of responses to the two parts of the question differed. Responses to the second question reflected perceptions about parent feelings as well as behaviors; therefore, one of the coding categories for these responses dealt with feelings.

Parent responses to the first part of this question (What do you think you do well as a parent?) were coded as either:

- A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low knowledge level, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors
- B. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Moderate knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors
- C. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: High knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors
- D. Change in behavior selection/choice

A total of 161 parent responses to this question were coded. Of these responses:

- 86 (53.4%) reflected "no change" categories and

- 75 (46.6%) reflected "change" categories.

Among the responses reflecting no change:

- 8 (5%) showed no change, low knowledge, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors;
- 55 (34.1%) showed no change, moderate knowledge, and were developmentally appropriate; and
- 23 (14.3%) showed no change, high knowledge, and were developmentally appropriate.

Examples of each type of response follow.

A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low knowledge level, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors:

Pre: Staying sober. Because mostly the teenage girls that I know that have kids now are getting drunk and leaving their kids with baby sitters, and I just told myself I ain't going to be like the rest, you know. I am going to be different.

Post: Taking care of her and not drinking. Because I know some teenagers out on the reservation that have kids and leave them with a baby sitter and go and get drunk. I stay home and watch her and do everything with her, except sometimes when I want a break or something I will get a baby sitter and ride around with my friends or something.

Pre: Oh, sometimes nothing! I don't know. I guess I'm always trying to do what I think is best for Beth. I don't know that I always succeed at that.

Post: Hm, lately? Nothing! I don't know. I always feel like I'm always chewing her out. I don't feel like I do a whole lot positive lately.

B. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Moderate knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors:

Pre: Spend time with them. Try to listen to what's going on with them, what they're thinking about.

Post: I try to take the time to see what's going on with them, what's making them happy or sad at the moment.

Pre: I think I listen pretty well. I think I am able to show my love pretty easily. I know some people aren't. Those are the the main things.

Post: I think I listen really well. I think I show my love very easily. I think that by doing both those things I make a real warm home and that the kids feel very comfortable being at home.

Pre: I suppose the general taking care of your basic needs. There are so many things that you do. I guess have fun and explore and let her be an individual.

Post: Cover the basic needs stuff. Make sure they have good nutritious food, they get to bed on time. When they need attention, I try to make sure that I drop what I am doing and try to help her.

C. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: High knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors:

Pre: Besides just the basics of food and clothing, I try to give to my children some of the things I remember from childhood that I enjoyed doing. I try to use creativity like during the holidays. Try to spend some time with them with books. I enjoy that.

Post: I try and find some time, although it is hard, to do fun things with the kids and share time with them, when it is completely with them. I try and remember the things I did as a kid that were fun, and if I tell the kids about them, they usually hadn't even thought of it and then they have fun with it. Try and keep them active. We enjoy reading together so my oldest reads to his brothers sometimes, and I'll listen or else I'll read to them.

Pre: I am really patient. I have the ability, because this is my second child, to take a deep breath and step back if I'm in a struggle. I have learned that I'm usually the one who needs to pull back and change my expectations or something. If I'm feeling good, I can step back and look at the situation and figure out who can give and who can take and how to compromise. I try to put myself in the child's position. I can't always do that. Sometimes I just blow a fuse and that's it. I listen really well. I think I'm a pretty good parent. I spend all day with my kids, and I manage to stay relatively sane. I'm good at seeing what my kids like to do, and I'm good at drawing that out and encouraging that.

Post: I think I listen, I think I'm good at problem solving. I think I'm good at re-evaluating my behavior when I feel it isn't doing much good. I'm loving, I'm caring, I'm supportive. I'm good at giving good positive attention most of the time.

The examples of low knowledge responses indicated the need for continued involvement in the program for both increasing knowledge and understanding and helping parents develop skills and the ability to see strengths in what they did with their children. The moderate to high knowledge responses again revealed a continuum of responses from parents who generally felt they were doing well as parents when they entered the program and continued this feeling throughout the period of program participation. Behaviors reflected in these examples and the other responses from parents in the moderate to high knowledge categories included meeting their children's basic needs, letting their children know they were loved, understanding their children, spending time with their children, and encouraging their children to explore and try different activities.

D. Change in behavior selection/choice:

A wide range of behavior changes were evident in the responses of parents who reflected change in what they thought they did well as parents. Some noted attending classes and reading about parenting as a change. For example:

Pre: Give lots of attention. I try to think about what it is they need.

Post: I think I'm doing well. I give her as much attention as I hope. I try to be involved with ECFE classes, reading about parenting.

Some parents reflected change from little or no understanding of what a parent does to statements that reflected understanding of their children, and some parents showed a shift in attention from basic care to more child-focused concerns. For example:

Pre: Hm, what do I do well as a parent? I don't know what I do. Um, I don't even feel like a parent. I don't know, that's really hard for me to answer

Post: This is hard. Well, I think I try to facilitate independence. I think I do that pretty well. I think I do a good job of expressing my love to him. I am consistent throughout the day.

Pre: I keep my kids pretty clean all the time. My house is always clean, and they're always fed.

Post: I try hard to understand her and be patient with her. She's just a kid.

Many parents noted the following types of change in what they thought they did well as parents:

- Communicating more effectively with their children
- Giving time and attention, showing patience
- Listening to their children, showing respect and increased understanding
- Increasing sensitivity to their children, following their children's lead, "tuning in" to their children
- Encouraging their children to solve problems rather than doing things for them, allowing for exploration and discovery
- Working to improve their understanding of and approaches to guidance and discipline including gaining more self-control as parents
- Thinking before acting in situations with their children

These types of change are evident in the following set of examples.

Pre: I think that I just, I as a parent, I try to maintain a loving, happy, warm environment at home.

Post: I think I, as a parent, I try to encourage communication. He has been strong in verbal skills for a long, long time and so it's easy for him to use words like "angry" or "sad" or "unhappy" or "happy" or "glad," and so I think as far as the communication part, that's something that I do really well. I could be more patient, as probably all parents can.

Pre: Well, I think I'm really a good parent. Very caring, good mother. Easy to love. I feel I'm a good provider, very loving.

Post: I think I do well in spending quite a bit of time with him and take out time to play with him. And I think I do well in that I read to him a lot, and we sing a lot of songs and keep him entertained. He likes that. I do finger plays with him, and he likes those a lot. And I think I provide for him good. He eats food and has nice clothes -- that's what I mean by providing. And I think I am pretty consistent with discipline.

Pre: I guess on the most part I give her the attention she needs. I'm happy that I only work part time so I can watch her grow day by day.

Post: I think I respect her as a person. I didn't know if I would because I didn't have much experience with little kids, and I thought maybe I wouldn't see her as someone with individual thoughts and feelings. But I think I'm pretty good at that.

Pre: I spend a lot of time with Bryahn.

Post: I've gained so much patience that I never, ever thought I had. Ever. It just very much surprises me the patience that I have with him. I think that's the thing that I do -- I'm very patient with him and let him -- getting from the house to the car to everything, I try to accommodate his pace which isn't always my pace. My patience is better. It's really been a surprising thing.

Pre: I think it is easy for me to be with him and play with him. I think spending time with him is important.

Post: I like being with my child, and I am with him a lot. I am in tune with what he wants. I stick to his schedule as much as I can and make him happy. Even so, I have to sacrifice some things for myself.

Pre: Loving, getting better at discipline, doing it positively I should say. Yelling just upsets him. Taking care of him, I guess.

Post: Handling situations. I think I'm getting a little better at taking a problem and trying to solve it. Really working hard on discipline, not punishment. I have that on my refrigerator. Trying to associate discipline with what they're doing instead of saying, "If you do this, then you can't watch TV." Trying to associate the discipline now with whatever it is they're doing.

Pre: I care for my kids, and I love my kids a lot. We try to work out the problems right away. Or almost, try to get to them before they happen.

Post: I found out that keeping myself under control rather than losing control in certain situations helps myself and the children a lot. Rather than getting real mad and angry, I just handle things in a calm, more quiet way. Seems to be better for everybody. I don't get so upset. Keep myself under control helps a lot.

Pre: I am really good at loving. I am a really loving person, and I also spend a lot of time with him and enjoy that.

Post: I take time with Marty. I listen well to him. He's a little person with a personality of his own. I don't think there are that many times when I lost it with him. I get frustrated, but he has needs that have to be met. I think about what I say and do before I do it, so I'm not making major errors with him. I think it through so I don't have regrets later.

Pre: Playing with him and being involved with him.

Post: I think I am pretty flexible. I like to let them decide things and then work with them. I like to do that. I think I notice things more than some parents. If the child is falling apart, I think I feel more for them and I feel like I want to help them. So I want to be more involved in what goes on.

Pre: Ah, well, I guess I'm a real organized person in so far as taking care of her basic needs. I manage to do that pretty well, and wherever I go I always have the right things to go with her and stuff like that. I guess it's that.

Post: I guess I'd like to think I have the patience to let her discover things. Let her find things out for herself. Let her figure out how to get out of a tight spot instead of always

jumping up and trying to do it for her. I guess try and sit back and let her do it herself which is fun to see. Eventually she will do it even though it seems like it takes forever. You want to help them, but for their own sake I guess I just sit still and wait, you know.

Some parents reflected what appeared to be a high level of knowledge and age appropriate interactions coming into the program and yet exhibited qualitative change in their responses in the behaviors they were already doing well. For example:

Pre: Well, she's full of questions, and I try to listen real well to her and sometimes, it's funny, a lot of people don't understand what she's talking about, but I know because I know her, and I know the way she talks. And I think I do that real well, and I listen to what she's saying, and I let her complete her sentences and not try and get, you know, too impatient, like I'm too busy to listen to her.

Post: Well, when I want to say something to her, I've been trying to look her more in the face and to set her down, and we've really been communicating well that way, and she knows I listen to her when I look at her like that, and I know she listens to me when I look her in the eyes. And I try to always give her the attention when she needs it, you know, which is hard sometimes. You have to stop what you're doing and give your full attention, but they deserve that. Just like I deserve her attention, too. And I feel that she's come a long way. We do that pretty good now.

Finally, some parents reflected insight and positive change in their responses, and yet they were struggling in some areas of their parenting and were likely to benefit from more time in the program and more support for what they were trying to do well as parents. For example:

Pre: Mm, I don't know. I try to do everything right. Hopefully, I'm doing it right. The only, ah, I don't know, really what do you do? Most of it I think I do right. There's a few things that I'm sure I don't do everything right, but we just learn as we go along.

Post: Well, pretty much I think I do real good except for I have a tendency to holler which I don't like, but it just kind of runs in our family. Like my father was a yeller and so is my mother, so my temper gets the best of me. That's just the bad thing that I have to fight all the time is just yelling at him. Which I don't think is too good instead of just calming down and talking to him. Cause he doesn't respond to, to yelling or spankings, anything like that. He doesn't respond to it at all. It just makes it worse.

Throughout the responses to this part of the question, it was evident that parents needed support and reinforcement for what they were doing well as parents along with information to increase their understanding of their children and their interactions with their children.

Parent responses to the second part of this question (What do you not do so well as a parent? In your interview at the beginning of the program you were asked what you didn't do well as a parent. You said: " _____ " How do you feel about that now?) were coded as either:

- A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low knowledge level, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors
- B. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors
- C. (1) Change in behavior selection/choice: Increase or start doing
- C. (2) Change in behavior selection/choice: Decrease or stop doing
- D. Change in quality of behavior
- E. Change in feelings

A total of 141 responses were coded. Of these responses:

- 46 (32.6%) reflected "no change" categories and
- 95 (67.4%) reflected "change" categories.

Among the responses reflecting no change:

- 27 (19.1%) showed no change, low knowledge, and were vague or developmentally inappropriate and
- 19 (13.5%) showed no change, moderate to high knowledge, and were developmentally appropriate.

Among the responses reflecting change:

- 46 (32.6%) showed an increase in or starting of behaviors,
- 10 (7.1%) showed a decrease in or stopping of behaviors,
- 27 (19.1%) showed a change in the quality of behavior, and
- 12 (8.6%) showed a change in feelings.

Examples of each type of response follow.

- A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low knowledge level, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors:

Pre: I need more patience.

Post: I still need more patience.

Pre: Sometimes I don't have enough patience with her.

Post: I still don't have enough patience. Does anybody?

Pre: I don't discipline very well because I don't want to hurt her feelings. I let her get by with so much and then I holler at her. I probably should have hollered at her in the beginning.

Post: Basically still the same. I've gotten better, but when she whines I give into her. My husband says I shouldn't give into her.

Pre: Not being consistent with discipline.

Post: Still patience and consistency a little bit of a problem.

Pre: I have a short fuse. I get fed up with the whole issue of parenting a lot.

Post: It got much, much worse. I felt a shorter and shorter fuse and was more and more fed up with it. It got to a crisis stage, so I had to see a doctor about two weeks ago because it was at a breaking point. It's on the upswing, but I still am fed up with parenting. That hasn't changed. But the fact that I don't seem to get so rattled is the positive effect. I'm on drugs, and, hopefully, that will help me remember that these situations can be dealt with besides hollering. Instead of hollering about it, you diffuse it in a different way. And, since I'm getting practice at doing that, since I feel calmer, I can see where that will come easier and easier as it is successful.

As is evident in the responses above, the "no change, low knowledge and vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors" category reflected impatience and difficulty with what is labeled as "discipline" as the most consistent challenges to these parents. All responses in this category, and especially the last one listed above, reinforce the need for ongoing parent education and support programs like the ones in which these parents were participating.

B. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors:

Pre: I could probably be there more for him, but it's tough when you're working whatever hours a day or when they need you around to do this. It seems like "Dad, do this with me," or "Dad, do that with me." Then I say, "Well, you've got two other brothers and sisters. Do it with them." No, they all want to do it with me or Mom for some reason. That makes me angry sometimes that they can't play more with each other.

Post: I feel our marriage suffers it because we both work off different shifts, and we don't have that time. When we'd like to be alone together, they're always there. It's a power struggle or just a struggle for attention every which way. Even the wife's pulling this way, and you do the best you can. There's only so much time.

Pre: Sometimes I think just having the patience when things are hectic and not remembering always that they don't have to be perfect. I think I have pretty high expectations for my children and that sometimes that's a bad thing. When I'm out in public or in church, I'm expecting so much, and when I don't get it, sometimes I feel disappointed and I think I shouldn't feel that way.

Post: As you were saying it, I thought, "Yeah, that's still true." I think I still do that, and I think your child's behavior reflects on you as a person, too. Maybe it shouldn't, but I think that for a lot of people it does, and that's still something I'm trying to work on and relax a little bit more about. I do want them to behave and be perceived by other people as good listeners and well behaved children.

Pre: I think maybe it's kinda related, you know, because I'm so organized sometimes I don't just sit back and enjoy the moment. I'm so busy being busy that I don't just enjoy her for her sake and what's happening at the moment. I'm always thinking about the next thing that's going on.

Post: I still have to struggle with that. Maybe I'm more aware of it now, but I don't just sit down and play with her. I always feel like I have to do something in the kitchen. Well, maybe tomorrow. Bake -- you know, getting ready for a birthday party. But I still think the more active, the more fun she is to be with, and my sister-in-law told me this summer, "If she's outside, you're going to be outside and you're just gonna have to relax and figure

that's where your time is gonna be spent." It probably won't be like this next summer. She'll be older and will be more able to play with herself or by herself so I'm kinda looking forward to my summer off. I just go play.

Even though these parents exhibited a higher level of knowledge and more elaborate responses to the question than the first group, they also showed frustration at their inability to change what it was they did not feel they did well as parents. Many of them indicated a lack of time to deal with the challenges they faced, and many indicated circumstances such as work, marital difficulties, being tired or busy, and having other things on their mind as interfering with their ability to make desired change. These parents' responses reflected both: (1) the difficulty in making changes in well established dispositions and behavior patterns or life styles even though awareness had been raised and a desire for change was evident and (2) the value of ongoing parent education classes to support parents in continuing efforts to make changes in areas where they recognized a desire to do so.

As evident in the following example, at the higher end of the "no change" continuum a few parents reflected insight about things they did not do so well and a recognition that it was "okay" to not be a "perfect" parent all the time. Even these parents are likely to benefit from the education and support available in ongoing parent education classes.

Pre: Well, you know there are times when I get real frustrated or real angry, and I suppose I say something. Maybe something little, but something I shouldn't have said. It has been quite a while since I have done anything like that. There are times as a parent when you don't feel you handled things right, you can't always do it right. But you feel like you didn't handle it the way you wanted to, but you are caught up in the emotion of the time or you're out of time, but those have been limited times.

Post: I still do the same thing. I think that is a lifelong challenge. I just keep working at it. It doesn't happen that often. I think if it does, the kids know that even if we are adults, we don't always do the right thing. Adults can make mistakes, and we can make up and bond again. We can say we are sorry and everything can be okay, too. It's got to be okay because we would be in trouble. We never do it right all of the time. It is hard.

C. (1) Change in behavior selection/choice: Increase or start doing:

Pre: My husband says I am a good mom. It is hard to tell what good is. Maybe discipline -- maybe I am not as consistent.

Post: I think that as she has begun to understand more and to be able to communicate what she wants or needs, I have been able to be a little more consistent because she understands more than a ten month old. I guess I don't know how much they understand, but I don't think they understand as much. Also, just being aware that was a weakness I had. I try now to be more consistent than I was before.

Pre: I don't know how to discipline whatsoever, and I don't believe in it. And I know this is a big problem with me.

Post: That is still a problem. No, but I, I'm really aware of it, and I try, you know, I try to work through things. I try to be as, you know, set limits for him and everything, and I do.

Pre: I can't say "no" to that kid. She is my whole life. I think that that's the hardest thing for me is to tell her, "No, you can't." Then again I still do it. I think it's the hardest thing for me to tell her, "No."

Post: It is easier for me to tell her "No" now because I can explain to her and she can understand why. She can understand why I say "No," and -- it's hard to explain -- it's like all of a sudden a realization that she wants to do all these things and a lot that she can do. I have learned that I have to meet my needs as well as hers. Even if she wants to drag me out to the park, and I don't want to go because I have to do my homework or I have to do something else, I can tell her, "No, Mom has to do this, but I will do it when I have time or next time." I think I can do that a little easier.

Pre: I guess be more patient. You needs lots of patience with a child, and I try not to do things for him. I would like to let him try to learn more things instead of me making it easier by doing it myself.

Post: I still have a habit of doing that, but I'm kinda learning, too, that he needs really to do that on his own even though he makes a mistake, even that it may take longer for him to do something. He's got to learn to do things for himself or he'll be depending on me for the rest of his life.

Pre: Lose patience, so many negatives, say "No" too often, and I do spank him, and I feel guilty about it. But the stair steps just aren't enough. Really like to have relations when I never have to spank.

Post: That has changed. The spanking is down to a minimum because we use "time out," and we find that actually works better for John than spanking, although there are times when he still gets spanked.

Pre: If I slap her hand or bottom, I don't feel good about that. I think it is necessary because she does not understand what is good and what is bad and what is good for her.

Post: I learned the difference of what is good for her and what is bad for her. I learned many, many things from the group of parents. When I stayed in Mexico, my mother helped me with making food or something. When I came to this town, I was alone with my husband, and we were new parents. The group has helped me learn the difference of good to bad.

Pre: Discipline sometimes. He has a temper, and he gets it from me. Not really a temper, but we're both stubborn, and sometimes I feel like I'm too short with him, especially at this age. That's I think the biggest thing.

Post: I think that I worked on that a lot because we learned some things like expressing the feelings that he's feeling, putting him in his room when he gets real frustrated. We hadn't tried that before, so I feel like I've come a long way in that I feel a lot better about it. There are some times still that I get real upset, and I'm starting to fly off the handle, and I'm starting to yell at him, and I really shouldn't, so then usually my husband is around and he takes over, and if he is the one getting too upset, then I do. It usually works out. If I'm alone or something, I just leave. I walk away from it and say, "I can't talk to you about this right now, and I'm going to sit over here. Mommy is really upset now, and I'm going to sit over here until I can calm down." So that's usually what we do now.

Pre: I think I sometimes get over excited as far as yelling at my child when he's naughty. Sometimes I get over it, but everybody has bad days, and I sometimes feel guilty. Maybe I shouldn't, but there's times I think I get a little more angry than I should.

Post: Well, I think now that he's gone through preschool and stuff, and we've gone through these classes, I think I've tried more ways that we learn through those classes. Like trying different approaches, and it seems to work a little better. I used to yell saying, "You are the one, or it's your fault, or whatever." To use a different approach, I think it works better. They don't feel as guilty when you're mad at them.

The parents with responses coded in this category reflected dealing with the same issues as parents showing no change in their reported behavior -- frequent lack of patience with their children and many issues around discipline and guidance of their children. The following new or increasing types of behaviors were evident in the examples above and throughout the responses in this category:

- More comfort and consistency with setting limits for their children
- Increased patience and self-control
- Allowing their children to do more for themselves
- Increasing awareness and use of a wider range of options to guide their children's behavior
- Finding alternatives to spanking and yelling that work
- Sharing caregiving with a partner when losing patience or feeling challenged

Some of these changes parents acknowledged occurred in response to observed developmental changes in their children. Many of the parents' comments reflected increased understanding of their own children and of development in children in general which helped them see and more appropriately respond to these changes.

The following response category consists of parent responses reflecting obvious stopping of or decrease in what they recognized as undesirable behaviors. These kinds of stopped or decreased behaviors were also often evident in some of the examples above which focused on behaviors parents chose to start or increase doing.

C. (2) Change in behavior selection/choice: Decrease or stop doing:

Pre: I'm short tempered. I do control my temper, but sometimes the shouting gets out of hand. I'm not, I try not to be physical. It's mostly just yelling.

Post: I've gotten better where I don't yell as much. Sometimes when certain things happen, I get a little loud, but it's not like it used to be. A lot more sit down, explain what happened or try to do it in a more sensible, calm way helps a lot. I've noticed it, too, and I think the kids noticed it, too, that I haven't been yelling that much anymore either.

Pre: I yell at her. I mean, she's just a baby. I yell at her when I get mad at her. She doesn't know. I mean she doesn't know what it means or anything, but she knows I'm yelling at her, and that's just not right.

Post: I don't yell at her. We definitely do not yell at her anymore, and when I feel like I'm about to, I think about it and realize, "Hey, that's not right." She shouldn't be yelled at, and I'll try and talk to her. I don't yell at her.

Pre: Well, sometimes I get very impatient with her, like if she is on the potty, I just, I rush her too much sometimes and so, you know, I just, I just, I get impatient sometimes with her and I get angry because she's not doing things as quickly as I'd like her to.

Post: I've been trying to give her more time to get ready, you know, I don't rush her when she's in the bathroom. I figure she'll, you know, there's no one else has to get in there, then there's no big deal. You know, as long as she's not goofin' around or playing around, then I don't mind. I just, you know, give her more time to get ready. If she wants to put her own clothes on, I think that's great. That's better than me getting her ready. Just because I wanna get it done a couple minutes faster.

Pre: I think I'm too pushy with her as far as helping her learn. I don't think I'm doing real good with that. I don't know. I just, I don't think I do real good with helping her grow because I think I'm too pushy.

Post: Well, I've eased off on being so pushy with her. I think I'm doing better with that. Um. I think I'm helping her a little more by doing things that she wants to do and the things that she's showing an interest in learning rather than saying, "Well, Tina, we have to learn how to read, we have to learn our ABC's," rather than saying that stuff, I say, "What do you want to learn?" And if she wants me to read to her so that she can hear the story and maybe learn something from the story or the pictures, then she brings the book to me, or she'll come out and start watching me how I do dishes, and I think she learns through that. But I don't push her into doing anything that I don't think she wants to do. If she shows me that she wants to learn it, then I show her. So I've eased off on being so pushy I think.

These examples and others in this category showed clear decreases in parent behaviors such as yelling, pushing, and rushing children.

D. Change in quality of behavior:

As indicated in the examples below, some of the change responses reflected more qualitative changes in parents including changes in knowledge, perceptions, and understanding of their children and children in general which led to more developmentally appropriate interaction with them.

Pre: I tend to get a little impatient, well, sometimes a lot. I do a lot of one-on-one with them, and in return, it's hard because it's not expected at that age, but if I want her to do something, I want her to do it now. I know that at this toddler stage that's hard. But if I'm in a hurry or if it's important or danger or something is involved, I tend to lose my patience and get angry.

Post: I'm still working on it. I feel I have more control over getting impatient because I understand her more. With the other one I already went through it so you can understand, but it's the first one, the oldest, that the different stages hit home. I think it's just because you understand what they're going through.

Pre: Right now we are fighting with trying to get her to eat, and I'm not having much luck.

Post: Now she is eating. I have found out from the classes that there are times when children just don't want to eat, so I just don't fight with her anymore about that. I'm just relaxed with it.

Pre: I guess I don't always know how to respond to some situations and things that she does.

Post: I think that one of the things, as I've said, is that I don't look at her as necessarily being naughty. I know that children have that foolishness in them that they need the guidance. I think that's the main thing.

Pre: I guess there are a lot of things I don't do. I don't know, that's difficult to say, if I don't discipline her at the right time. I don't know that.

Post: Then I didn't know what to do. I had no knowledge to base myself on. In class, they taught you things. I like the fact that they had a lot of suggestions on how to discipline your child and when not to discipline them. It made you feel a lot better about yourself in that every child goes through this, what to expect as far as a two year old. As far as disciplining, I got a book which was suggested which was a great book. I guess I can handle Mary much easier knowing how to respond to her and that kind of thing.

E. Change in feeling:

Although many of the parent responses to this question reflected a blend of their knowledge level and their behaviors and feelings, some responses clearly reflected strong changes in feelings in regard to what they thought they did not do so well as parents. For example:

Pre: Something I think that I need to be real cautious of as a parent is being over protective and that kind of thing and worrying about her and stuff and that she's any new baby or child or whatever and I am going to make mistakes. I have to realize that it all works out.

Post: Before that first interview I was home with her still, and since then I have gone back to work and she has been at the sitters now for approximately six months, and it has been working out real well. I think it's good for me to see that Jennifer does well with somebody else. That was a big worry. Maybe that comes with being a first-time parent. You worry about what's going to happen when I take them, and what if it doesn't work out, and then what are you going to do and all that kind of stuff, so I think that's gotten better, and I think I have been able to get going that way. I think that has helped.

Pre: I'm having a hard time with the stress factor of being a new parent. To me it's still hard adjusting, and that bothers me. I still miss my old lifestyle -- of being free. Just that adjustment to parenthood. I think how I sometimes feel like, like things won't get better or that I won't be able to adjust to him as well as I'd like to.

Post: I am adjusting gradually to my new lifestyle. He doesn't seem as overwhelming as he was in the beginning because everything was just so new. As the days and the weeks and the months go by and as he develops, I can enjoy it more, or I have the capacity to enjoy it more than I could at the beginning where everything was just too new.

Pre: Well, I don't know if it's that I don't do it well. Sometimes there are situations where I'm not sure that I said the right thing or had him do the right thing, but that comes with trial and error and learning as a parent. There are times of course that he wants us to play with him, either I'm doing laundry or other things, and it makes me feel bad. I can't say that maybe that I do that wrong, or I don't do it well, but it makes me feel guilty because I

cannot always do what he wants me to do because I have other responsibilities like housework and all the other things.

Post: I think he has realized as he gets older that there are other things that we do have to do. I don't think I feel as guilty as I have. And I think he's older, he 's grown up a lot in the last eight or nine months, and it's easier for him to do activities by himself or offer other suggestions of things he can do while we're doing whatever else we have to do.

The examples above and others in this category reflected classic examples of feelings parents have regarding what they might not do so well and the kinds of change in feelings they are capable of with increased knowledge, understanding, and experience. First-time parents clearly experience many feelings of inadequacy, and the feelings of guilt reflected in the last example are very common among parents. Involvement in parent education classes is likely to play an important role in the kind of changes evident in these examples.

Parents appeared to show less change in areas in which they thought they did well as parents than in areas in which they thought they did not do so well. Whether expressing change or no change and exhibiting low or higher levels of knowledge, many of these parents struggled with the need for more patience and the challenges they experienced in guiding their children's behavior. Often circumstances which they could not always control interfered with their attempts to change what they thought they did not do so well. When change was evident in parent responses, parents reported using a number of more developmentally appropriate responses (e.g., increased patience, allowing their children to do more for themselves, finding alternatives to spanking and yelling) and a reduction in feelings such as inadequacy and guilt.

Question Eight

Focus: Family Life and Interaction

Preprogram and Postprogram Questions (same for both):

Now let's switch to your family life more generally. At times we all like some things about family life and dislike some things.

8. a. What do you like about your family life?
- b. When you have a problem with your family life, maybe something you don't like about your family or something you want to change, what do you do?

These questions shifted attention from parent behaviors and parent-child interaction to family interaction and family life. They were intended to identify parents' perceptions of what they liked about their family life, what they did to change something in their family life that they did not like or viewed as a problem, and how their perceptions of these strategies changed during the period of program participation. The coding of responses to

the two parts of the question differed. Responses to the first question revealed perceptions about parent feelings as well as behaviors; therefore, two of the coding categories for these responses dealt with feelings.

Parent responses to the first part of this question (What do you like about your family life?) were coded as either:

- A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors
- B. Change in behavior selection/choice
- C. No pre-post change in feelings: Moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors
- D. Change in feelings

A total of 160 parent responses to the first part of this question were coded. Of these responses:

- 92 (57.5%) focused more on behaviors and
- 68 (42.5%) focused more on feelings.

Among the behavior responses:

- 50 (31.25%) responses showed no change in behavior, moderate to high knowledge and
- 42 (26.25%) responses reflected changes in behavior.

Among the feeling responses:

- 40 (25%) responses showed no change in feelings, moderate to high knowledge and
- 28 (17.5%) reflected changes in feelings.

Among all responses to this questions:

- 90 (56.25%) reflected no change in behavior or feelings and
- 70 (43.75%) reflected change in behavior and feelings.

As is apparent in the examples which follow, the majority of parent responses to this question reflected a general sense of satisfaction with family life and only moderate change where change was evident.

- A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors:

Pre: We do things together. Spend time together. Go to church together. My husband's really in love with the children. He cares about them.

Post: We do things together. We like to be together -- enjoy each other. I just like being a mother.

Pre: I love having the kids and my husband and doing things together.

Post: I like to spend the times together and things we do together. It's fun.

Pre: Well, I love the fact that I am being at home rather than working. I am being with my kids, and I am the one that is raising my kids. It makes everything at home smoother. It makes it easier for my husband to put in the long hours that he needs for his job. It makes it easier for the kids that they don't have to get up at a certain point in the morning. I like having the two of them. So far Alex is getting along real well with the baby. It is fun.

Post: It is just fun. I've got two great kids, and now with summer and spring, we can be outside and enjoy the flowers and the garden and the weather. The baby is walking and getting more mobile and has an easier schedule, so they are just fun days.

Pre: Our time together and what we do as a group is important, ah, more and more because I work at night part time, and my husband's gone all day. It works so supper time is usually the big time when we're sitting down and talking and whatever discussion before I go to work. So it's just family time, our time together.

Post: Oh, it's good. It, it's real good. We couldn't do better. I mean we both are working and have insurance and have a nice home, and, you know, what more could anybody want? Food on the table, and we get along real well.

Pre: I like the togetherness and having the two kids. Being able to share the two kids between my husband and me.

Post: Being together with my husband and the kids. The main thing I think about or my favorite time of the day is when my husband comes home and we are all together and I see my husband with the kids. Just all of us being together.

Pre: Um, I, we have worked hard to maintain the levels of flexibility in the way that we want our house, and that gives us flexibility in the way that we can raise our child for the first, and still, but for the first two-and-a-half years totally my spouse and I shared child care responsibilities and that has given, I think, a really strong bond with both me and with my spouse, and I think it's really great for all of us.

Post: Well, I like that we have a lot of flexibility in our time commitments. We're able to spend, though it's not always predictable when we're able to spend it, but we're able to spend a lot of time together as a family unit, and that's something that both my spouse and I really value, and it's work to have happen, it's part of our family, that's what I value the most I guess.

B. Change in behavior selection/choice:

Pre: I live with my parents and stuff. We are all just pretty close. It's kind of nice at the same time because then my mom can share with me her wisdom of all her years of raising all of us, and it's kind of good to have that. Just being able to help with Tammy in some ways. She don't have her dad around her so it's kind of nice that way.

Post: We get along so well, you know. I live with my parents. Sometimes my parents and I kind of clash, but it's like something's happened. I don't know what it was. It's just like all of a sudden we all get along better. Tammy is Grandpa's girl, and yet she knows I am her mom and it's kind of hard that she has two mothers, but she knows that I am the mom, it's not Grandma and Mom, too, and Grandpa is Dad. I think it's gotten a lot better because I think we have this understanding. It took us a long time to get there. It was just like all of a sudden, "Hey, this is right."

Pre: That we're really happy. We're in a new area, meeting new people. People are really friendly. We were way out in the country before, and there was no one to talk to. We were in a play group, but it just wasn't the same as being in a neighborhood.

Post: I think we get along so well. There really aren't any problems. We're real blessed in that respect. We're willing to do a lot of the same things. We're both willing to compromise. I might not want to do some of the things he wants to do and vice versa, but we're willing to get along and not make ourselves the number one priority.

Pre: It's happy. We're close, and we do things as a family.

Post: We all get along. If we have a problem we discuss and not fight. We really enjoy Lisa.

Pre: I really like that our family is together, talking, everything is great. When Brad and Jamie were younger, I was at work, and now I haven't worked since November, and I've enjoyed my time with the boys.

Post: I like the time that we spend together. The things that we do together. I really enjoy that. The talking together. The kids are really good at telling me about what they did in class, and they talk to me about their feelings. I always thought that was really important that kids should be able to talk to their parents about what they feel.

Pre: I like my husband and my kids a lot. I like my house.

Post: Five months ago I would have said nothing. It still is kind of hard to put my finger on it. I'm happy to have family, a husband and children. Theoretically, it's what I want. I like it when we go out together. We just got a bicycle trailer, and we tried that out. That was a lot of fun. Dinner times are always enjoyahble. It's fun to exchange information about what was done during the day. We're fascinated by the ways the kids change. That's a real positive thing, just watching our kids grow up.

In these examples of change in what parents liked about their family life and in the other parent responses in this category, the parents were generally happy with their family interaction when they entered the program. They tended to reflect even more satisfaction with family life by the second interview and expressed new behaviors they had added to their family life to enhance what they already saw as "good." Caution is needed in stating that these changes in satisfaction with family life were directly related to program participation, although increased awareness of the importance of family interactions and relationships because of program participation may have influenced some of this change in family behavior.

Many of the parent responses reflecting either no change or change in behavior in regard to what they liked about family life also included elements of feelings. Some of the parent responses predominantly reflected feelings and were coded as such, whether reflecting no change or change in feelings about family life. Examples follow.

C. No pre-post change in feelings: Moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors:

Pre: Just doing things together, supporting each other.

Post: Sharing and loving.

Pre: I like it, the feeling of being a family, the closeness and being together.

Post: We like watching the kids grow, the closeness and the bond between us, the activities we do.

Pre: That we feel closer since there are three and my husband and I are even closer now, and we have something to share that we didn't have before. A common bond.

Post: A chance to pull my husband and I closer together, and everything just seems more fun.

Pre: It's pretty all consuming. It's so consuming in fact that I don't really have the perspective on it to tell you what I like and what I don't like. We all get along really well. I love my kids, and I love my husband, and we have a good time together even though it's totally hectic. And that's good. I'm totally happy. Before I had kids I always felt like something was missing. Now with my kids, my life is chaos, and that's nice. We do good stuff together. It's a good situation.

Post: It's chaotic, it's crazy, it's kids. I like that.

Pre: I love sharing, love someone to share with. I was single for so long that it's -- that I had a family I could share everything, sadness and gladness. I really enjoy watching Johnny develop. At one point in my life I didn't think I would have children, and it's just so wonderful to look at Johnny and think he's my child. He excites me -- and that's just fun.

Post: I like being together. I like enjoying things as a family. I enjoy the closeness. You're never alone. You're not lonely, never. As a single person you face loneliness, but as a family there's always somebody there who loves you and you love them.

Pre: I really like being at home and at night. I just like the life we live, kind of a just everyday type thing. Let's see, I don't know how to explain it. I like being married to the husband I'm married to, and I like my two kids. It's just the everyday things in general that are good.

Post: I like everything almost. I mean I really feel like I can wake up and say, "This is the way it's supposed to be. It's just really good." I think it encompasses everything, including arguments and disagreements and sadness and happiness. I think it just -- we really work well together.

Pre: I like the stability, increasing amounts of sanity. My husband and I both come from dysfunctional families, and we try very hard not to get sucked into everybody else's garbage. That's one of the things I like. He and I are both on the same track. It's not that everything is going to be perfect for us, but we have made a conscious effort to at least make it normal. Our priorities as far as family stuff is concerned are pretty much the same.

Post: The stability. We're all in the same mode as far as the kids go and what we want for them. And what we want for ourselves. At this point we're all going in the same direction, and that's real comfortable. As far as where my husband and I came from, stability and sanity in the house is a big thing. A big goal. I think that's one of the things I really like the best.

D. Change in feelings:

Pre: Well, I like the idea of being home. Of doing things together when we have the time.

Post: I like our closeness. There's a genuine love and caring in our family. There isn't a lot of tension in our family. That's nice.

Pre: Um, that we are careful to allow ourselves time to spend with our family -- spend our time together. We try not to over schedule.

Post: I like the openness that we have with each other and the ability to not hide our feelings and be able to say what we think, and we can never be afraid to say if something is going wrong or if there is something we don't like about what's happening. We do that with each other a lot.

Pre: We are a family. My husband wanted a child. He's active in the family. He doesn't need to do a whole lot of things outside the family. He does things with her, takes her to the park, just the two of them. He pays attention to her. I never had that as a family. My father did not do that. He wants a home. He wants a family, that was important to him. I guess that's really enough for me. At this age I know these are the important things. He wants to go to church. There is that base.

Post: I like being together. The fact that we have enough money and a nice home. I really like my home. I love my daughter. I like that we don't have a lot of outside things. Our little world at home. Not a lot of people in and out. We have privacy at home. I like the fact that I can cope better with my husband's alcoholism. That is has not ruined my life in the way that I was letting it destroy me and my family before. Before I was so bitter and so full of anger. I had almost stopped believing there was a God. I spent all my time trying to control his drinking. Trying to stop him. I went to Alanon and even that didn't help. With this class I have begun to see where that need to control the uncontrollable came from. It came from my panic when he'd drink that reminded me of my childhood. My father became very violent when he drank. Now I know I am an adult and I can make it here and I am not helpless. When I start to panic, I remember that.

Whether dealing with behaviors or feelings and expressing change or no change, the parent responses to this question regarding what parents liked about their family life indicated that:

- They liked time at home with their family, their children and spouse;
- They liked each other and being together;
- They liked doing things together, having fun together; and
- They liked the sense of family, what family meant to them.

A strong sense of family and value of family time together seemed to pervade the responses of all parents in this study no matter what their level of knowledge or how they responded to other questions. It is very possible that program participation played a role in some of these strong feelings regarding the importance of family life.

Parent responses to the second part of this question (When you have a problem with your family life, maybe something you don't like about your family or something you want to change, what do you do?) were coded as either:

- A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low to moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors
- B. Change in behavior selection/choice: Increase or start doing
- C. Change in quality of behavior

A total of 159 parent responses to the first part of this question were coded. Of these responses:

- 70 (44%) reflected no change in behavior, low to moderate to high knowledge levels and
- 89 (56%) reflected changes in behavior.

Within the behavior change responses:

- 65 (41%) indicated starting or increasing behaviors and
- 24 (15%) indicated behavioral changes that were more qualitative in nature.

Examples of each type of response follow.

- A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low to moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors:

Within this category there were only three responses at the low knowledge end of the continuum. For example, one parent stated:

Pre: Nothing; usually learning to like it.

Post: Either I do nothing, sit or pout, or if it's really bad, I call a girlfriend.

Most "no change" responses reflected either moderate to high knowledge levels. For example:

Pre: I guess most of the time when there's a problem we don't work it out until there's a boiling point, and once it gets to that boiling point, then we sort of explode and sort of start over again and talk about it, but I don't think it's an ongoing talk. It always gets to the point where things erupt, and then we have to kind of start over again, and then it's okay until there's another problem. So we kind of hit and miss I guess you could say.

Post: We try to talk about it, but sometimes it gets to a boiling point where it becomes a yelling match. We still try to talk first, but sometimes it doesn't work like we strive for.

Pre: That is something you have to sit down and talk about, even though sometimes it's hard. I don't consider myself to be necessarily a young mother. It really changes your marriage. It really puts kind of a kink in it, and I think there is a lot of things that you have to talk about so neither person is getting frustrated by it.

Post: We just talk about it. I guess there is nothing else you can really do. I think otherwise there are resentments. I think that can happen a lot of times with people. As far as having to make changes in you life because the child is here now and if you don't talk about it, it can be bad. I have seen that happen to different people.

Pre: I sit down and discuss it with my husband. Try to work it out. Make the best of whatever it is I don't like at the time, and then my husband and I talk about it, and my husband and I try to do something about it.

Post: I guess that depends on what the problem is. The only thing that I can think of is I go to my husband, and we talk about it, and we try to work things out.

Pre: We discuss it. If anything comes up, my husband and I talk about it, and if we feel that it would involve our four year old talking with us, then we include him in that, too. We try to see what our alternatives are for change and working through together.

Post: We talk about it. For instance my husband and the two boys in the family often, I think, think that I'm a maid or something. So if I'm feeling sort of taken advantage of as far as that goes, then I'll let them know. I really would appreciate more help cleaning up or whatever that might be. So we just verbalize a lot about those kinds of things.

Pre: Family council. We talk and have a conference. We have family home evening lessons once a week with different activities, spiritual or other. My husband's two sons are living with us, so we all participate together. We just all talk and work it out.

Post: We verbalize it. We have family meetings, especially with having older stepsons. It has been a big role in our lives that we have to talk. We have to communicate to each other about what we expect.

Within the continuum of responses in this category, almost all parents indicated "talking about" problems as the primary means they used for dealing with family problems. Much of this discussion was between husbands and wives, and in some cases the children were also involved.

Most of the change responses to this question indicated that parents started doing certain things or increased doing what they were already doing. A portion of the change responses also reflected qualitative differences in how they dealt with family problems. Examples of responses in both categories follow. The first two responses below reflect the thinking of teen parents.

B. Change in behavior selection/choice: Increase or start doing:

Pre: I kind of keep things inside until all of a sudden, one day I will just explode, and I will start yelling at everybody, but then I will calm down and talk to my mom or dad and talk to Teresa, and we just figure things out and deal with it. Take one day at a time.

Post: I used to rant and rave and have a temper tantrum or something, but now we kind of talk about it, like, "This is the way I feel," and I think we are able to talk about things now.

Pre: Well, I usually at the times I'm angry, I'll leave. Then later I'll try and discuss it with whomever I'm angry at which is usually my sister. Try and see if there is something we can do to cooperate so it goes better.

Post: Well, I'll talk it over with an adult, my parenting teacher, or somebody in my family. Either I get suggestions, or I just try and work it out in some way or another, try and make it better.

Pre: I just have to put up with it. I guess there's not really anything that I can do. I don't know what to do.

Post: We try to talk about it. It doesn't always work, but we try to talk about it.

Pre: Nothing. I guess that's one thing I'm in this class to learn. I guess I just ignore it.

Post: I guess now I would take action, whereas before I never would have done anything. I would have ignored it. And now I would do something about it. Just sit down with my husband, probably first, and decide what the real problem is. Before I probably didn't have the time to even discuss it, so I just put it on the back burner.

Pre: Well, it's a little more stressful, you know. I'm finding it's really stressful. We wouldn't think that it would be, but we're both under a lot of stress, and I guess that's a big problem cause we're finding tempers are really short at times, and I've never noticed this ever, and we've been married for three years, and Jim, he, I'm just finding kind of short fuses now and then.

Post: Well, we talk about it. We don't always communicate at the right time, when we should, when the issues are coming up, but eventually we do talk about it. We come up with some answers and ideas and negotiating. When we have problems sometimes I talk to my sisters and get an objective view and feedback from them.

Pre: We try to talk things out. We always have, but we just haven't made it a point to stress communication in our relationship because we are both not communicating. We do communicate well with other people, so we work on it. When there are problems, we try to sit down and find solutions.

Post: My husband and I are starting to communicate more with each other when we are not really happy with the way things are going. Before we had our daughter, we were not really good about solving conflicts. Now we realize we have to if we want a good family life. If you want things to roll smoothly, you have to communicate. I think we are a lot better about that than we were before.

Pre: I communicate with his dad that there is something that I don't like or something that I need or something that we need to work on.

Post: Now we have our family meeting. If we have a problem, or even if we don't have a problem, we get together and make sure we talk about stuff, whatever it is.

Pre: Well, we talk it over until we can work something out.

Post: Well, we discuss it. We have this thing where something that is getting you down can seem overwhelming, so we sit down with paper and pencil and list all the things that are wrong. Then when it's down on paper we can work together to solve it.

Pre: Theoretically or really? Just feel upset for a while until someone notices and then finally talk about it when things get to the point where they need attention.

Post: The resource I use most is the parent class, and we have a joy or concern period where everyone brings up something that is a joy or concern. More often than not it is a concern, but I guess that it is here I find the more support through other mothers. It is especially good for me because our neighborhood doesn't have other mothers at home. I get help sometimes from family, but the kids aren't close enough in age, and they have forgotten what their kids did at that age.

Pre: Talk about it. Another frustrating thing is like having to work my hours. It is very difficult to work around with my husband's hours and that kind of thing. Those are outside factors that everybody has to deal with in order to have a family, so that becomes

real frustrating. It's not so bad now that my family is here, and they are very supportive, and they can help us out with baby sitting.

Post: The first thing I did, especially when I went to class every week was to voice my concerns. Being able to talk to experts, but also other moms there had a lot of suggestions. I thought that was wonderful. I kept telling them that I wished we had three or four hours. Also, I have a sister that has children, and I am very close to my mom. Just a lot of friends.

Pre: I think about the only thing I would really like to change is being alone. I would like that to be the way we planned it, but it's not, so we just have to adjust. If I get tired of it being just the two of us then we go visit Grandma and Grandpa or go visit friends. I have a close friend that went through delivery with me, so we spend time with them. We have a nice family circle outside our immediate house, so that is nice.

Post: I don't like being the only parent. She was planned, but being divorced wasn't in the picture, so that's really hard to live with. Sometimes it's a big responsibility to be alone, and that's kind of scary sometimes, but I have been seeing a counselor which has really helped.

C. Change in quality of behavior:

Pre: We can usually talk about it between my husband or with the kids.

Post: Well, usually I see if whatever changes are realistic or if it's just something going on inside of me. I guess if it's a realistic one then usually my husband and I will sit down and talk about it to see if it's something that we can change or is it just something that we have to accept. Most of the time we can't change it, so then we just deal with it the best we can.

Pre: We talk things out. We discuss it together and get out feelings and opinions stated on whatever the topic is.

Post: We talk about it first and see how the other one is feeling about it, if they have the same feelings at all. We express our strong feelings and try to talk about ways to improve the situation. Just by talking about it we come to an agreement. Communication is really important. Otherwise we just stewed on it, and the other person didn't have a clue that you were upset by it.

As with the "no change" responses, most of the responses in the "change" category reflected situations where parents were starting or increasing discussion with others as a way to do something about problems in family life. Most of this increased communication was between husbands and wives, and it often focused on use of problem solving skills that included identifying the nature of the problem and feelings about the problem, setting goals for addressing the problem, identifying strategies for making changes and meeting these goals, and then taking action to make changes. Talking with other family members, friends, teachers and other parents in the program, and a counselor were other sources parents identified for dealing with family problems.

The responses to this question about what families do when they have problems in family life have clear implications for curriculum in Early Childhood Family Education. Teaching

communication and problem solving skills is very important along with providing support for parents and helping parents understand the importance to their family life of feeling support from others. Often this support comes in the form of having someone else to talk with, to share concerns with, and to get feedback and ideas from to help them with their concerns.

Question Nine

Focus: Parent Self-Care

Preprogram Question:

9. As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself?

Postprogram Questions:

9. As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself?

a. Has the way you take care of yourself changed in any way in the last few months?

This question shifted the focus from parent-child interaction and family life to the parents themselves. This question was included in the interviews because program staff attempt to help parents understand that it is important for parents to feel cared for and comfortable with themselves in order for them to effectively support the development of their children. As with questions 7b and 8a, responses to this question reflected feelings as well as behaviors, and the coding categories below also reflect this.

Parent responses to this question were coded as either:

- A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low to moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors
- B. (1) Change in behavior selection/choice: Increase or start doing
- B. (2) Change in behavior selection/choice: Decrease or stop doing
- C. (1) Change in feelings: Increase or start
- C. (2) Change in feelings: Decrease or stop

A total of 181 responses to this question were coded. "No change" responses accounted for 78 (43%) of the responses and 103 (57%) of the responses were in "change" categories. Among all the responses:

- 149 (82%) focused more on behaviors and
- 32 (18%) focused more on feelings.

All the "no change" responses (78 [43%]) were in the "no change in behavior" category which reflects a continuum of low to moderate to high knowledge. In the behavior change categories:

- 64 (35%) showed an increase in or starting of behaviors and
- 7 (4%) showed a decrease in or stopping of particular behaviors.

There were no "no change" categories related to feelings. In the two "change" categories related to feelings:

- 24 (13%) of the responses showed an increase in or starting of feelings and
- 8 (5%) showed a decrease in or stopping of particular feelings.

Examples of each type of response follow.

A. No pre-post change in behavior selection/choice: Low to moderate to high knowledge level, developmentally appropriate descriptors:

Pre: Not very good.

Post: Lately I haven't been doing too good on taking care of myself. I still take the best care of Becky I can. (Change question response): No.

Pre: I think I am neglected. I do. Everybody comes first, and by the time it gets around to me, I am pretty tired. So if I get five minutes, I am doing good.

Post: Not very good. I guess I always make sure everything is done at home first. You know, make sure lunch is made, clothes are washed, etc., and then about 9:30 maybe, since there will be a few minutes right there, I just want to go and sit there maybe. (Change question response): No.

Pre: Nothing. Usually the kids come first. I really don't have time for myself. I work part-time. When I get home, I'm exhausted.

Post: I don't have time for myself. When I have time for myself, I'm ready to collapse and sleep. (Change question response): No.

Pre: Try to have one or two nights or afternoons to do something on my own or a bath.

Post: Lately I don't. Trying to get some free time each week. (Change question response): Not too much.

Pre: I bowl on Monday night. That's my night out when I don't have to think about nothing but myself.

Post: I bowl on Monday nights. That's my night out. (Change question response): I don't think so.

Pre: Well, when I have time, if I can possibly squeeze it in, which usually means letting the house go, and most of the time I feel guilty, but sometimes I just say, "The heck with it. If you guys want to give me some time and clean up the house, that's fine. If you can live with it messy, then that's fine, too." But if I get time, I like to sew or do art work or kinda spend some time back in my room by myself just working on different craft things.

Post: That's one of my problems! Well, unless I let the house go, and say "Forget it! I'm not going to wash the dishes or anything else." Then after the kids are in bed, I sit and do cross stitch or something I want to do, but I usually feel guilty for doing it because everything else is going to pot while I'm sitting there. So I guess most of the time I'm

kinda last on the list, and I don't usually get to myself, and sometimes I feel really resentful for it, and other times, it's like, "Oh, well, maybe tomorrow." (Change question response): I don't think so. I guess, I don't know. I usually feel that if I do anything for myself, I'm being selfish. And I know you're supposed to do that, but I just have a little problem with trying to. I think Jeff's attitude has changed toward it. It used to be that he got a little upset because maybe the clothes weren't folded or the dishes weren't washed, whatever, and now he's gotten to the point where, well, "You need time to yourself, too. Don't worry about it." I think the more he gets that way, the easier it'll be for me.

Pre: Well, I usually need some time by myself to just read for a little while, even just time to have, sometimes a nice long shower.

Post: Take long showers. (Change question response): Not that I know of.

Pre: Nutrition. We eat very nutritiously and exercise. We just have a real loving household. My husband takes good care of me.

Post: I have my alone time. I guess that's my salvation. It's just -- my husband and I have our time alone each week. We can do, we let each other have time for ourselves, and that's most important. (Change question response): Not in the last few months, no.

Pre: For instance last night, I wanted time for a walk -- just myself. So I go for a walk when everyone's in bed, the kids are in bed. Read, read a book or a magazine. Be out in the garden. Just spend a little time alone.

Post: Lots of baths at 9:00 at night when everyone is in bed to relax a little bit. When the kids go to bed sometimes my husband is tired, and he just wants to go to bed, too, but I like to be able to have at least an hour to myself where there's just myself to watch TV, read the paper or whatever. (Change question response): Not necessarily. It's pretty much been how I've dealt with taking care of myself.

Pre: I feel the only -- before I had my little son, I walked, and I still do that, even after he was first born. I didn't give it up. I walk every day, and I feel that one thing -- it helps me relieve stress, and I can problem solve or else just think about nothing as I'm walking so it's very helpful for me, and I do it every day at least one hour.

Post: Well, I still walk every day, and that to me is really important. I have an hour to myself, and plus I feel like I get the relaxation from the physical exercise and the stress release from day to day life. (Change question response): No, I don't think so. It's been about the same.

Pre: I go to work two days a week. And that's important to me. It gives me an out. It gives me something to do. I can keep up my license. I wouldn't want my children in day care full-time. Two days a week is okay. I enjoy reading. I do try and get out without the kids, and I try to go off without the kids often meaning once every three months. That's better than some people.

Post: I still work part-time two days a week, and that's my main reason for going to work is that it's something that I do just for myself. I do enjoy reading, gardening, and I like to sew, although I don't have a lot of time for it, but I do enjoy it. And I try to get out and walk with a friend a couple, three, four times a week. Those are things that I try to do for myself. (Change question response): I don't think so. I still do the same things. I enjoy a lot of the same things.

The examples of "no change" responses listed above reflect somewhat of a sequenced continuum of levels of knowledge, but they also seem to reflect more of a continuum of the kinds of ways parents were taking care of themselves. Some of the parents were doing

little or nothing to take care of themselves; some did some things to take care of themselves but felt guilty about it; some felt supported by their partners or families in taking care of themselves and in accomplishing household tasks, and some did not; and some appeared to do well taking care of themselves through good nutrition, exercise, time alone, and time doing activities they liked to do and that they found relaxing to do.

It is clear from these responses that for many parents, especially mothers, it was hard to carry out all of the responsibilities that they felt obligated to do and take care of themselves at the same time. These responses indicated that programs can do much more to help parents feel that it is important for them to take care of themselves and help them find ways to do so and get support from others for doing so. Programs can also continue to provide support and reinforcement to those parents who are doing an effective job taking care of themselves.

B. (1) Change in behavior selection/choice: Increase or start doing:

Pre: I guess until just recently I didn't. I considered myself lucky to get my teeth brushed by noon and shower every other day. Now I guess I just have to take time for myself and, if the kids tear the house apart while I am taking my shower, I guess that is the way it has to be. They are big enough now so they will play, and I can take a shower and brush my teeth and sometimes I put make-up on.

Post: Just lately I have been going to ceramics. I go once a week for an hour, and my husband watches the kids for that hour. (Change question response): Yes, it has. Before or last fall or whatever, I didn't go anywhere. I didn't leave them with my husband, and I didn't leave them with baby sitters. I didn't go anywhere. Now I leave them once a week with Bob, my husband, and go to ceramics.

Pre: That's not easy. Just by trying to get a few minutes by myself, go to the store or something. Other than that, it's always with the kids or something, so it's hard.

Post: I don't get to do that very often. So I try to go to the store alone for maybe five or ten minutes. (Change question response): Yes, I have gotten ideas from here about taking time of myself. I never used to do that.

Pre: Well, when I get mad or if I feel like I've had it that day, I'll just take a walk, and that's something a teacher taught me in school. I was in special ed, and she said there is a part of your adrenaline that when you get angry that if you walk it releases a hormone in your body that settles you down, and I found that is more effective than if I was just to sit there and have my own little tantrum, and that way I'm not showing my anger in front of my daughter.

Post: Well, I come up to Jim one night during the week, and I say I need a night out away from the both of you and tell him to watch Tina, and I'll usually go down to the bowling alley or the store or some place just to get out away from the two of them for a little bit. I guess after Tina goes to bed I try and spend a little bit of time just with myself, be it just watching TV or doing a crossword puzzle or whatever, but time for myself to unwind, try and find it after she goes to bed. (Change question response): Well, like I guess it has. I really never in the months before this never really did take care of myself. I was always

taking care of Tina or helping this friend with that problem or whatever and never really took any time for myself, and so I have started doing that, even like I say, even if it's just going bowling, which I found out the other night I'm not so great at.

Pre: Well, that's a tough one because there isn't a lot of time. I have one little son who is really rowdy. I take long baths. I go outside and scream if I need to. I call my real good close friend who is also my cousin, and I'm here in this particular program for myself, too, not just for Jamie.

Post: I have Tuesday night off for myself, and I either go shopping or go to Perkins and coffee with girlfriends. (Change question response): Just this Tuesday night out I guess would be the major thing.

As these examples indicate, the majority of change responses which reflected starting or doing more of something were responses of mothers who were finding activities to do to "give them a break," to get them away from their homes and families even for a short period of time. And even for mothers who were finding time for these "outings," whether alone or with others, they continued to experience a heavy load of responsibilities and little time for themselves.

B. (2) Change in behavior selection/choice: Decrease or stop doing:

Pre: Um, I try to get, I try to get eight hours (of sleep) which usually doesn't quite happen. Um, what else do I do to take care of myself? I try to do what I want to do instead of doing what people want me to do, or what I perceive that they want me to do, to try to stay focused on that.

Post: I've really been trying unsuccessfully and repeatedly to quit smoking. I think I've -- one of the things though is recognizing and accepting my own limitations more. And, and saying, "Stop," and letting things go. I get real wound up with trying to get too much done, um, something as simple as, I, I have to let go of comparison shopping. I have to, yah know, everything doesn't have, I'm learning that everything doesn't have to be quite as perfect as I want it to be. There's just not time for that anymore. There's other things that are more important, and those things are just too time consuming. So I've kind of eased up on that stuff and stopped expecting so much out of myself.

Pre: I guess you have to set time aside each day to kinda pamper yourself. You have to sneak time in when the kids are taking a nap. You have to be able to verbalize to your husband or to your kids that you know, "I need a break. I need to go out and leave." As long as you got appropriate day care you can, you need to leave when you know you've had enough or when you know you need a break. And I guess I really needed that lately, and I have used it.

Post: Well, about four months ago, I joined a jazzercise class, and I've been doing that a couple days a week until about a month ago when I had to quit due to financial difficulties, and I started to take time out to myself to, you know, either get away, go do some sightseeing, go do some shopping, get some exercise, get out there, go for a walk now that it's finally nice, at least the sun shines every now and then. (Change question response): Getting out of this relationship has been one of the best things I could have done for myself and the kids and, you know, I'm out of the rut that I was in for the last few years I suppose.

In this category of change responses, parents indicated lowering their high expectations for themselves, attempting to stop negative behaviors such as smoking and drinking, and making changes in what they saw as unhealthy relationships. A number of the parent responses in this category focusing on stopping or decreasing behaviors to better care for themselves indicated parents who were struggling with very challenging personal and family situations.

The following example reflects a parent who was doing less to take care of herself than she had previously because of what she perceived as the growing demands of her baby.

Pre: That's hard to do with a baby. If I get time to read the newspaper, that's enough for me. Just to sit and have a cup of coffee and read the newspaper -- that's my time.

Post: I'm still working on that. I really have to try to find time for myself. Mothers usually don't have time. (Change question response): I'm taking less time for myself because Jenna is demanding more time. She is more active.

C. (1) Change in feelings: Increase or start:

Pre: Try to give myself "time out" away from everybody, get a baby sitter and just go for a walk so I can get my piece of mind, just to be alone.

Post: I give myself time away from my family. I'll go for walks, or I'll just, I'll go into a room by myself. I just try and do things more for myself. (Change question response): Yes. Before I really took care of everybody else but myself, and I realized that that wasn't making me very happy, and I'm sure that my daughter could see that I wasn't very happy, and so I've learned that I have to take care of myself in order to make her happy because if I'm not happy she couldn't be happy.

Post only: I am a little more aware of the time I need. I used to think this is my job. I need to be here all the time. Now it's okay to feel overwhelmed and express that and do something about that. Now I learned that it's okay to ask him and to do something about my needs. Before, I'd say it's in my head, and Mark had a hard day at work, but now I accept my needs and feel that's okay, and I have the right to do something about it.

Pre: Right now I really haven't done nothing. I like to take walks, but since I have had Josh, I don't like leaving him. When I do leave him, all I do is worry about him. So right now at this point there's nothing that I really do. I guess that's what I do. I go to the bathroom. That's the place I can be by myself. I just sit there and read a magazine, and I am still with Josh. I am still in the house.

Post: It's gotten a lot easier. I don't know if it's within me, but I never felt before like someone could take care of Josh like I could. And now I don't feel that. I feel that he'll be okay. And I think it's because of this program, that it's helped me with that. I know my child, and I know what he wants. Well, other people can learn that, and I didn't realize that until recently.

In this category of change in feelings, parents showed changed expectations, increased awareness of the need to take care of themselves, and an understanding of the direct relationship between their happiness and that of their children and their family.

C. (2) Change in feelings: Decrease or stop:

Post only: Pretty good about finding time for myself. I wasn't when the kids were little, and I think that it really stressed me, and I learned that I really had to learn to take time for myself. I think that by just not beating myself up mentally as much is probably the biggest change. I think that I had in my mind that I really wasn't the best of people because my older child is so difficult. You know, "What did I do wrong?" Like with the yelling, when I really don't get much support from my husband. He says I yell an awful lot. I thought maybe I was yelling too much, but in class all the hands went up when we were asked about yelling, and I thought, "Gee, maybe I'm not doing so much yelling, and I'm not the only one who yells?" It helped.

Pre: I need my private time. So far I really don't have time to myself, or I'll stay up late to get things done or just to do whatever I'd like to do. Or when my husband gets home -- he's home on Wednesday afternoons or the weekends -- I'll say, "Your turn," and I'll do my own thing even if it's only for an hour. Sometimes that's all I need.

Post: Stay up late so I can have a little time to myself. My husband's good on Saturdays. He's pretty much gone during the week. Saturday he kind of gives it my day for a little bit, and he relieves me. (Change question response): I guess I don't feel so guilty when I take a little "time out." I used to think my husband's off working or going to school. He's busy all the time, then I should be busy all the time, and I would feel guilty when I took little "time outs." Now I don't because if Mom gets stressed out, the whole family goes kaput.

Post only: Now I am freer to say if I need a block of time. I feel not so guilty just saying that to my husband or to somebody that I just need a break, so can they take over for a while.

Post only: I'm not so lonely as I was.

Post only: I don't feel as frightened and neurotic and like I gotta be there as much as possible.

In this group of responses, the most common reduction in feelings seen as a form of self-care was that of a decreased sense of guilt. Also, parents mentioned feeling less lonely and less frightened.

The parent responses to this question, more so than any other group of responses, reflected the challenges many parents, especially mothers, felt trying to meet the many demands they sensed they had placed upon them, whether by themselves or others. Many of these mothers saw their spouses more as baby sitters than as equal partners in parenting. The

demands felt by some of these parents were even more challenging for those struggling with particularly difficult personal or family situations. The area of parent self-care is certainly one of importance to continually address in parent education classes.

QUESTION TEN

Focus: Perceived Changes in Parent, Child, and Family

Postprogram Questions Only:

10. What changes, if any, have you noted in your child or family from participating in this program?
 - a. What are the main things you yourself have gotten from participating in the program?

These final questions were the only questions designed to directly seek parents thoughts as to what role the program played in changes in themselves, their children, and/or their families since they began program participation. Parent responses to these questions were coded as either:

- A. No pre-post change
- B. Change

When parents were asked what changes they had noticed, if any, in their children, their families, or themselves since beginning program participation, most of the parents focused on themselves and what they had gotten out of the program. Among the 321 coded responses to this questions:

- 192 (59.8%) were parent focused,
- 114 (35.5%) focused on the child, and
- 15 (4.7%) focused on the family.

These were obviously questions asking about change, and most of the parents interviewed did indicate perception of change in themselves as parents, in their children, and/or in their families. Among all the responses:

- 37 (11.5%) reflected no change and
- 284 (88.5%) reflected change.

Within the 192 responses focusing on parent change:

- 7 (3.6%) reflected no change and
- 185 (96.4%) reflected change.

Within the 114 responses focusing on change in the child:

- 28 (24.6%) reflected no change and
- 86 (75.4%) reflected change.

Finally, within the 15 responses focusing on change in the family:

- 2 (13%) reflected no change and
- 13 (87%) reflected change.

Examples of responses in each category for parent, child, and family follow.

Parent

A. No pre-post change:

Examples of the seven parent responses reflecting "no change" follow.

- Well, to be honest we haven't done that much with the program. We haven't been real consistent, mainly because of our car problem. Now we do have a car. But I think it's a good program and, you know, probably something that I should try to plug us into more than I do now. I just haven't taken the time to do it right now.
- I think it's just one of the best things that we've done. I am so thankful for it.
- What have I gotten from it? It's hard to measure some of the things because it's so new. I mean we started right away. I don't know what I would have done differently if I hadn't had these classes.

In the first example, the parent had little opportunity to experience the program. In the two other examples, it is clearly possible that these parents did perceive change because of their expressed pleasure with the program, but their statements do not reflect what that change might have been.

B. Change:

Among the 185 parent responses expressing some change related to themselves as parents, most of their statements reflected at least moderate change, and some reflected more dramatic change. There were clearly several key themes in the kinds of changes parents noted in themselves as evident in the series of examples below. These themes fell into five broad categories:

- Increased feelings of support from others, knowing they are "not alone" in their feelings and experiences and that other parents have the same problems and concerns;
- An increased sense of confidence and self-esteem as a parent;
- Increased knowledge, awareness, and understanding about children and child development and the parental role in relation to child development;
- Changed perceptions and expectations for themselves as parents and for their children based on increased knowledge, awareness, and understanding about children and child development and the parental role in relation to child development; and

- Changes in behavior based on increased feelings of support from others, increased self-confidence, increased knowledge, and changed perceptions and expectations of their children and themselves.

Parent responses reflected a predominant pattern of change in their feelings about themselves and their sense of support from others and in their knowledge, perceptions, and expectations about their children, which together appeared to form the basis for subsequent behavior change.

More specific examples of behavior change indicated by parents throughout their responses included:

- Stopping to observe, listen, and think before acting with their children;
- Beginning to respond to their children based on the child's perspective, becoming more in tune to and sensitive to their children's point of view; and
- Spending more time together interacting with their children and having new ideas of activities to do with their children.

The following examples illustrate both the broad themes and the more specific examples of behavior change noted above. Although these examples are categorized according to one specific theme or type of behavior change, many of them contain parent thoughts that overlap into more than one of the theme and behavior change areas.

Theme 1: Examples of increased feelings of support from others, knowing they are "not alone" in their feelings and experiences and that other parents have the same problems and concerns:

- Well, I guess the one thing that the program did for me is that I am not the only one having these problems and that there are other families out there that are having just as much frustration with raising their kids as my husband and I are. I think that was the big thing just to be aware that you are not alone.
- I've learned that I'm not alone, and there's other parents that feel like I do, and it's just been so helpful to listen to other parents and get different ideas and how to handle different situations. I don't know what I'd do without it. If I couldn't come to ECFE, it would be terrible.
- From being alone as a parent and talking about the problems they have, and you feel you are not alone. Everybody else is dealing with this, too.
- Some of the main things I've gotten for myself -- to know I'm not alone. It's kinda given me a sounding board for problems. It's been real helpful for getting some solutions for problems.

- The thought that all parents are going through the same and that you are not alone. You think that you have a horrendous problem, and you find out someone has got something worse or has the same problem and dealt with it and that sort of thing. It is just sort of nice to talk to people who go through the same things everyday that you do.

- I enjoy being with single moms, and I feel affirmed in a way that the problems that I have are not unique, that other people have experienced these things. And that issues that I feel are that, that I face being a single parent I can look around the circle and see that these other people know what I'm talking about.

Theme 2: Examples of an increased sense of confidence and self-esteem as a parent:

- I think the program really helped. I wish every mother would do it because the confidence you gain as a parent, as a person, from that class is just incredible. You know people coming in with their concerns and being able to leave there feeling okay and what they did was right, or maybe it wasn't right, but they have something else to go by now. I learned how to deal with a two year old and how to feel good about your parenting and yourself, different little songs to sing to your children and different games, that helps, too. Whereas, I didn't know all of the fun little songs, the games and the different ideas for playing and painting and to bring that home to keep Missy occupied.

- I love the encouragement. I know at one time I went to something, and I never came home encouraged, and I said I'm not going to go to this program anymore, but here I've really felt a lot of encouragement. It's really helped me to see life differently.

- A little more confidence in what I do and confidence I am doing an okay job. I hear of other people doing the same things and being in the same situations, and I don't feel so bad. Another thing that has been good is I have gotten a lot of ideas of activities to do outside or inside. They are things I would have never thought of. I just think the program is really good. The parents are important, and I wish more people would think it is important to come to these classes and not worry so much about having a clean house or whatever. I think it is really important.

- Changes in myself? I think it's pretty much what I've just been saying. Not hurting myself so much. Not feeling that I'm such a bad parent. And I think just getting better ideas on how to parent. It's been very interesting, very informative. Both the classes that I took were very good.

Themes 3 and 4: Examples of increased knowledge, awareness, and understanding about children and child development and the parental role in relation to child development; and changed perceptions and expectations for themselves as parents and for their children based on increased knowledge, awareness, and understanding about children and child development and the parental role in relation to child development:

- Friends, I think, is the big one. When I first joined ECFE I was new to the community, and I've got a lot of friendships through the program. I have learned a lot more about my child and different ways of raising children. I have learned from some of the other parents in the program and that has been very helpful.

- I got a better appreciation of some of the finer details of parenting. Some of the finer things that I would have otherwise not have noticed in the sense of Anne or how children do things at certain ages. Some little things in terms of how they respond, how they grow

up, that I otherwise would probably take for granted and not notice. I think that one nice thing this class provides is sitting back, you look at your child growing up, and from, I think I consider it a study type analysis as a child growing up more than classroom type, book type setting of how to grow up. Look at more why they do what they do when they do it. I liked that experience. It's interesting. It's something I didn't notice otherwise. You might notice it, but you don't think about it. The awareness of that has been nice.

- I discovered a peer group. Meeting with other people who have the same problems and also the kinds of information that I have been able to collect there about discipline, about nutrition, and safety. A lot of the information that the program has imparted confirms those instincts about what is important, what he needs, and what we need together. And that has mattered to me very much.

- Systematic approach to my feelings. I understand why I feel the way I do and why he is feeling the way he does and some good concrete things to do with my kids. Both of them really.

- I think that I've learned so much through this program, and I know my husband has, too. We look at things now, and we talk about things, where before we didn't. For instance, saying "No," for me was the way to do it. Say, "No," and they learn. But from people here, and from you, I learned a different approach. I'm more conscious of things now. I think it's benefitted me.

- Well, I learned to be more aware of how I parent. In setting limits and interacting with my child. You just don't hand them a bunch of blocks and say, "Go play." It helps to be active with them. I think before, especially when they are a baby, you don't really do much with them. I think if you are not aware that is what you are doing, I think that can continue on. I think coming to the class helped a lot with that to make me more aware of how I was doing things and how I might change things so that we can have a good parent-child relationship. I think that the class itself was really quite helpful. I did get quite a bit out of it and a lot of the activities that we do now.

- I think there is much less stress in our family around what her situation is as this baby who was radically premature and who went through this tough time. I think the class helped us to think of her more as to who she is and less as a premature baby, although we are still very aware of her prematurity. We also have a much keener awareness of who she is as an individual and to think of her as normal, as a person who has what's normal and average for her and who needs to be responded to that way, so I think it really helped us to come to terms with all that and accept who she is.

Theme 5: Examples of changes in behavior based on increased feelings of support from others, increased self-confidence, increased knowledge, and changed perceptions and expectations of their children and themselves:

a. Examples of stopping to observe, listen, and think before acting with their children:

- I'd say quite a bit, you know. I'll catch myself when I'm getting angry or I'll stop and think about some of the things that were said, and I'll think about it before I'll start or I'll start saying something and then I'll stop myself and so I'll, that's what I'll do. So I'll do that, I'll catch myself.

- It makes me think. Before I strike out or lash at the kids with my anger, you know, it stops me. I'll count to ten and start over again, you know, that type of a deal. I'm more calmer I'd say with them, that's helped.

- Stop and listen. That's what I learned basically is to stop and to listen. Before I would just yell. And to let my kids finish what they are saying. A lot of times they get half way through something, and I have something I want to say. I've learned that I need to let them finish what they are saying and entitle them to that. They are entitled to feel or think whatever, you know. I don't need to control that. I don't have any control over it as much as I would like to think I would. I don't, and I have learned that I just don't, and I like to let them finish what they are saying and learn from their own mistakes. Kids need to learn. If I keep tying my kid's shoe, they're never gonna learn how to tie. If I keep telling her she can't cross the street, she's never going to learn how. Basically, if I tell her she can't play with these people or he can't play with those people, he's never gonna learn what happens when you do.

b. Examples of beginning to respond to their children based on the child's perspective, becoming more in tune to and sensitive to their children's point of view:

- I'd say the biggest thing is in me -- that I pay more attention to Chris and his attitudes or his behavior. And I try to sit back, and, you know, before if he would have been into things, or whatever, I just would have said, "He's just trying to get to me." Well, now I think, "He's investigating, he's trying to learn, he doesn't realize that when he pulls a thing apart, it's going to fall apart or the middle is going to fall apart or whatever." I guess mostly my view of his behavior, see his side.

- A lot of it I think is being more in tune to what the children are -- maybe more the behavior things. They act like children because they're children. I'm trying to get away from "You're naughty" to saying, "What you did was not right." Put the blame on what happened rather than the child. Things like that, and that's a big change.

- I think, and I've probably told you before that what I've gotten most is I never really realized or gave it much thought. You know you have a child, and it's a lovely, wonderful thing. I never thought of children as separate individuals needing respect, and I think you were talking about rattles on infants' wrists. You didn't think that was respectful, and that kinda turned a light on in my head, and so in all that I do, and my husband, too, like when you're trying to give her some medicine or I never shove a bit down her throat or anything even if I want her to eat something. If she doesn't want it, I feel I need to respect her as a person, so I think that's the biggest thing I got from this group.

The following example illustrates both of the above two types of behavior change:

- I guess I have learned how to deal better with his different moods. I have learned how to deal with his tantrums. I have learned how to deal better with his shyness and how to get him to do things a little better. I have learned that maybe I should stand back and let him do a lot of things that I have been doing for him. The biggest thing I guess was last week. We talked about self-esteem. I realized the things I have been doing have not really been helping his self-esteem a lot. In fact, they have probably been hurting him a lot. I have been doing a lot of thinking. I realized I shouldn't talk about him in front of him and tell people that he is shy because it probably makes it even worse.

c. Examples of spending more time together interacting with their children and having new ideas of activities to do with their children:

- I think from the classes that we took we realized the importance of sitting down and doing things together, like playing games or giving your child more attention rather than just trying to get your daily chores done. We also made some friends from the class that live nearby, and we get the kids together so it was a nice way to have Bryahn meet some kids his own age and have friends and playmates.
- We spend more time with each other. By spending more time together, it means a lot more, and I took a lot for granted. Until you start talking about it and you are more aware of it.

The following two examples reflect unique types of parent responses to this final interview question regarding changes they noted in themselves as parents. The first parent indicated the progress she made as she struggled with life in a very stressful family situation. Ongoing involvement in the program is likely to be particularly important for this parent and others like her. The final example illustrates a parent who appeared to be in a very different situation than the first parent, and yet she spoke to the need for ongoing classes and the need for continual reminders for parents as their children grow and change.

- I have become a better parent, discipline and stuff. I know how to love better. I know about boundaries. I don't shame my kids like I used to before. I am a better parent, but I am sadder because I know how far I have to go and how I hurt my kids, and how bad the damage is. I was in denial before. I feel lousy about myself for this. I know you say I'm not supposed to blame myself, but I do. I've got to be careful because if I blame myself too much, I'll go back to drinking to stop the pain. I know the best thing I can do is just starting working one day at a time to change. Before I didn't know how my abuse affected me. I just figured everyone had some of that. I was real jealous of some of the parents in the group. They have it so good. They had such good lives. Maybe I can do it somewhat better now. I know how to do things like talk about feelings, set boundaries, not react to everything my kids do, and I've learned to care for them consistently instead of how I was doing it. I just wish I could go back to the beginning and start all over.
- I feel much different than I ever would without the parenting classes. My husband took a little bit of a class, and that was really nice because he came home, and you could just tell there was a big difference in the way he interacted with Brent and Michelle. He tried to be more patient. He just kind of changed his perspective. It was just great. I think he has forgotten because he had only a little crash course, and I have been in them forever, and I forget. I kind of feel, once you start, you want to stay in them forever. With a two year old, you can tell me something, and I need to be reminded later on. They are out of one phase, and they go back into it, and I need to be reminded how to deal with that. The program just can't stop with five year olds. So often the moms say to each other this has got to continue into their teenage years because parenting just doesn't stop. It gets tougher and tougher.

Child

As already indicated, within the 114 parent responses focusing on the child, 28 (24.6%) reflected no change, and 86 (75.4%) reflected change. Examples of responses in both categories follow.

A. No pre-post change:

- They really look forward to coming here. They have someone else to play with.
- Maggie gets really excited to come to school. She says, "Kids, songs," even when we drive by the school. She really likes the prospect of coming to school.
- I just think it helps him to be around other children.

Almost all of the parent responses in this "no change in child" category were of two types -- either their children liked to talk about and come to school or they thought it was nice for their children to be with other children.

B. Change:

- I think he's changed in getting along. In class he was always the most aggressive one. I think he's learned to get along better with people. When we say, "John, you can't pull hair, you can't push," I think he's starting to understand more. I don't know that he can sense other children's feelings, but I think he's a little better at realizing that they have feelings, too. He can't really do everything he wants to. People aren't for pushing down. People aren't for hitting. He doesn't seem to do it as often any more.
- Well, Chris seems to stand up for himself a little bit more than in the beginning of the program as I'm able to observe him interacting with other children. If other children have an idea of a way to play that's not the same idea that he has, he speaks up and lets his feelings be known which is something he didn't always do.
- The way they've learned to negotiate and, um, how to talk to each other, how to -- they're learning how to share. It's just been a real positive experience all around. It's just really good, really good.
- He is very self-assured. He can walk into a room and feel very comfortable. He's acquired a lot of friends, and he talks about the -- he's excited about coming. He's become excited about school so I know that when he goes to kindergarten he shouldn't have any problems because of the things that he's learned, and he feels comfortable with other people.
- Well, just a real key thing is Kyle feels real comfortable with the school setting, and it's setting him up to feel real good about school, and I'm sure he's benefitted from what I've learned.
- Well, like I said earlier, he's just really grown. Not, well, I suppose possibly he's turned three now, and I know they change quite a bit between two and a half and three, but, like I

say, without this program I don't know how he, I don't know how he would be. I think he, he would still be real timid and shy around people. And now he's learned to trust the teacher at ECFE and a few others and be around with kids his own age which he don't have any out where we live, and I just, I couldn't imagine him going to school at five and not having been through a program like this. I think he would be scared to death, and I really think it would hamper his education. Cause he would just be too shy to be involved in things.

- There are huge changes. Kristen is more assertive, and I feel she will do much better in kindergarten as a result. She was kind of a quiet girl who faded into the background before in a group. Now she has blossomed. She really likes school, and she is talking out in group and with the other children. She is very much more self confident. She seems to be able to lead her own life now because she seems to be aware. I can lead my life, and I don't need her so much now. Kristen used to get caught up into my feelings during fights. Now she doesn't.

- I think Brent has grown a lot just by coming to classes each week. After he comes to the classes you can tell that he's matured a little bit. It might be a real subtle change, but each week you notice just a little difference in what he's doing, and he's growing by watching the kids and being around them, and I think being in the group situation is real good for him, and I think he understands that he's part of a group, and I think that's real healthy for him.

- He's better at talking about his feelings and things. He asks how Mom or Dad feels. He can tell the mood they're in, more in tune with their feelings.

- Greg is getting rid of separation problems. That has definitely improved. His vocabulary has improved because he catches some words from there. Also, discipline with "time out."

- The biggest change for Jason is his independence and the ability to be away from me and not be so upset about it. There was a time where I could never leave him. He never left my side for the first year and a half of his life, and that's kind of scary with a parent to think that he never wants to be away from you. He is at ease with people, enjoying other people that he doesn't know. Is less frightened.

- The only goal I had with Kevin was separation when I came here because he would just loose his mind. He couldn't go any place without me. He's got that down really well now. He knows he's in a school, in a situation where you don't have to be perfect, but you need to not hit or this type of thing.

- Matt has just gone through a world of change. He was so shy before we came to this program that he wouldn't look or talk to anybody. His grandparents were all upset because he wouldn't go anywhere near them, and even my husband, he wouldn't go with Bob anywhere. He was scared to be anywhere. I couldn't take him to the grocery store without him having a fit and screaming. He is now just a different little kid. He is still really shy, but he is a lot better.

- Well, Ross made a dramatic change. I was telling Mary that before Ross came here he was at a nursery school, and the experience there was -- he didn't seem to enjoy his stay there, and then we came over here. Initially the first few times he was nervous because he had never been in a structured environment before, but now he can't wait to come back, so that tells me that he really enjoys being here. He shares more with his sister. And he also

has a friend, Adam, and being here has helped him learn how to play with him better than before. Before they would play a few minutes, and then they would be crying, but now he has become a big boy and doesn't cry. Occasionally he will, but most days they will play well.

- We're a lot, we're a lot calmer. I think we both feel more secure, we're both less frightened. Um, our relationship has improved significantly. We are back to being very concerned and affectionate with one another instead of these huge power battles that we were having on a regular basis. Yah know, it had gotten to the point where the power battles were the more, and it was really out of control, and, I mean, when we first started coming here, Jess wouldn't even look at me. I mean we had no eye contact anymore, and there was this just total break down of communication between the two of us. And the maternal bond was, has really been strengthened. We have all kinds of eye contact, we're back to being very affectionate, we communicate with one another, and that just keeps getting better because of his language skills that are developing so much right now. And we're just not constantly at odds with one another any more. Most of the time we're not at odds with one another. Most of the time we're getting along well.

The examples above illustrate the key kinds of changes parents described observing in their children. As indicated in the latter examples, some parents observed what they saw as quite dramatic changes. The most common changes included:

- Improved social interaction and relationships, development of social skills;
- An increased sense of self-confidence and self-esteem;
- Language development and enhanced communication skills;
- Expression of feelings; and
- Much more ease in separation and growth in independence.

All of these are commonly recognized elements of school readiness. Although some of these changes were likely to be developmental changes that would occur anyway over time, it is clear from parent responses that they viewed many of these changes as directly related to program participation. Many parents also indicated that their children were more likely to be ready to start kindergarten after program participation.

Family

As indicated previously, within the 15 parent responses focusing on the family, only 2 (13%) reflected no change, and 13 (78%) reflected change. Examples of responses in both categories follow.

A. No pre-post change:

- I don't think I have seen any changes in my husband.

B. Change:

- I think as a family we keep reminding each other, my wife and myself, we keep reminding each other what we have learned in school, especially how to approach Anne when we're frustrated.
- I think the involvement with the other children has been great. I think the whole family has learned a lot about just understanding the children.
- Mark and I discuss things a lot more than we would have before. He reads the handouts I bring home that we got in class. He's more interested in reading and learning about parenting as am I. I'll bring up something which came up in class discussion, and we discuss it. If I had not been going to class these things would not be brought up. This is great for us. We tend to agree a lot. We have a lot of the same ideals. I have really gotten into buying books and reading and educating myself and Mark as much as possible.
- I went to the special program. Wonderful! I really like it, and it really brought up communication between my husband and I in a little different look. I think that even a lot of things that have been brought up in class I've come home and brought it up to my husband and said, "Hey, maybe we should look at it his way." So it really has helped us a lot cause it's frustrating having little kids and stuff, you know. Even coming from a real healthy family, it is a hard job -- a never-ending job. And you want to do your best. That's a real big thing.

As evident in the examples above, most of the family changes focused on increased discussion between husbands and wives, either because they participated together or the wife brought home information and ideas to the husband that they discussed together. When both parents were exposed to or discussed the same information, they were often able to bring up what they had learned as helpful reminders during challenging situations.

Single Parent Results

The following results are based on the responses of the sixteen single parents interviewed who participated in classes specifically for single parents. These single parents represented six of the 24 programs involved in the study. Single parent responses to all questions were coded as reflecting either:

- A. No pre-post change
- B. Change

The number and percentage of "no change" and "change" responses to each question are listed in Table 5 in descending order from highest to lowest percent of response change. As with the group of 156 parents, the single parents indicated most change in response to question ten which asked them to directly express changes in themselves, their children, or their families after up to a year of program participation. They also expressed high

percentages of change in response to the questions related to getting their children to do what they wanted them to do, what they did well and not so well as parents, what they did to take care of themselves, and what they did when they did not feel so loving toward their children. The single parents showed the least change in what they did to show their children love. The responses of the single parent group were generally consistent with the other groups of parents with one exception. The single parents showed more change in response to question nine related to self-care than the other parents in the study.

Examples of responses to each question in each of the two code categories of "no change" and "change" follow along with discussion of the results.

Questions One and Two

Focus: Knowledge of Child Development

Preprogram and Postprogram Questions (same for both):

1. Tell me a little about your child. What is your child like? (Probe, if needed: What are some of the things your child is doing these days?)
2. Okay, your child is _____ years old. What are _____ year olds like? (Probe, if needed: What stands out to you about _____ year olds?)

Of the 32 responses to these two questions, 15 (47%) were coded as exhibiting no change, and 17 (53%) were coded as reflecting change in knowledge of children and how they develop.

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: She's three, likes to be with me all the time, likes to eat, likes to play with other kids, go to Grandma's. She's smart, knows everything, how to get away with things. Likes to read books, collection of Disney baby books are favorite. Likes to build with Legos.

Post: She's smart, talks a lot, been talking since she was one. She's very sensitive, like me. She has a hard time understanding why I can do things and she can't. I've always been kind of proud of her cause she's smart. She wants everything and gets everything, eats all the time, whether she's hungry or not, eats more than I do. She's learning. She knows her ABCs. She can count.

Pre: For the most part he's a pretty easy going kid. He's been a little bit less easy going since we've had so much stress in our house over the summer and fall. He's different in different situations. A lot of the time he's kind of quiet, likes to read stories, likes to do quiet things, and other times he's just a wild boy. Running and jumping and with incredible energy.

Post: He's really strong-willed, and he's kind of shy at first in front of people, and he's very interested in learning new things.

The parent responses in this category reflected a moderate level of knowledge of their children and child development with little or no change in knowledge expressed.

Table 5

Number and Percent of "No Change" and "Change" Responses by Question in Single Parent Group

QUESTION	NO CHANGE		CHANGE		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
(10) What changes, if any, have you noted in your child or family from participating in the program?	0	0.0	37	100.0	37	100.0
(5) How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do? (5a) Have your approaches in getting your child to do things changed in any ways in the last few months?	1	6.0	15	94.0	16	100.0
(7a) What do you think you do well as a parent?	3	19.0	13	81.0	16	100.0
(7b) What do you not do so well as a parent?	4	25.0	12	75.0	16	100.0
(9) As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself? (9a) Has the way you take care of yourself changed in any way in the last few months?	4	25.0	12	75.0	16	100.0
(4b) What do you do when you don't feel so loving? (4c) Has the way you express feelings to your child changed in any way in the last few months?	5	31.0	11	69.0	16	100.0
(8b) When you have a problem with your family life--maybe something you don't like about your family or something you want to change--what do you do?	7	44.0	9	56.0	16	100.0
(1) Tell me a little about your child. What is your child like? (2) Okay, your child is __ years old. What are __ year olds like?	15	47.0	17	53.0	32	100.0
(6) What do you do when your child is angry?	8	50.0	8	50.0	16	100.0
(8a) What do you like about your family?	9	56.0	7	44	16	100.0
(3) What do you and your child enjoy doing together? (3a) Has the way you spend time together changed in any way in the last few months?	10	62.5	6	37.5	16	100.0
(4a) We know there are times when most parents feel really full of love for a child and other times when they don't feel so loving. What do you do when you want to show your child love?	10	62.5	6	37.5	16	100.0
TOTALS	76	33	153	67	229	100.0

B. Change:

Pre: Well, he's 25 months. He's very, very active. He's smart and he's bright. He's really interesting. He can be lots of fun. He can be lots of trouble. And he's just constantly learning more and more and more. Never stops.

Post: He's a fireball. What's he like? Oh, well his language is really starting to develop. He had tubes put in his ears in February, and his language has just taken off. He was talking in complete sentences before, but now he's, like it just blows my mind how much he can talk. He's into doing more and more stuff for himself. Some real stuff to me that's real surprising. He likes to make toast. He doesn't necessarily like to eat it, but he likes to make it. He can run the TV and VCR. His memory really astounds me, and he seems to comprehend those kinds of things now that he never could before. Lots of banging. He wants to bang everything, so we're trying to find him toys that he can bang appropriately. He still likes balls. He likes boy toys. Even though he doesn't have a dad around, it's real clear that, that sexual preference for trucks and sports stuff and boy stuff.

Pre: I'd say twos are a lot of fun and a lot of work chasing them around. My son's affectionate, curious.

Post: They're very curious and imaginative. They're very aware of what's going on around them. And it seems like their whole world opens up, their mind opens up and they comprehend things more globally than they could before.

Pre: Real curious. Struggling with the independence thing. Wanting to do everything, but yet not able. Like getting dressed, brushing teeth, fixing breakfast. With her, her language is so advanced, developing sentences and paragraphs.

Post: Threes -- starting to have more confidence on going out on their own. Hopefully, having departed from the separation, you know, the separation between mom and child and being able to go out and socialize with other kids more. Mastering a lot of skills. Just coming into themselves more. That's how I would sum it up.

Pre: He's four years old. Very active. Hyper. Likes to get into things. He's a little boy.

Post: I don't know too much about my children. I am separated from them and have been for almost two years. I am going to be getting custody back in a few months. My boy who is four years old will be five soon. He seems to be sad a lot. He's also very active, and I think he moves a lot to avoid feeling. I never understood this before.

These parents had some knowledge of their children and child development when entering the program, but their postprogram responses were more expansive and reflected more depth of understanding including an understanding of developmental change. The last parent also reflected greater sensitivity to the needs of his child.

Question Three

Focus: Parent-child interaction activities and behaviors

Preprogram Question:

3. What do you and your child enjoy doing together?

Post program Question:

3. What do you and your child enjoy doing together?

a. Has the way you spend time together changed in any way in the last few months?

Of the 16 responses to this question, 10 (62.5%) were coded as exhibiting no change, and 6 (37.5%) were coded as reflecting change in the way parents spent time with their children.

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: Reading, tickling, cuddling, anything outdoors, watching TV, playing any kind of games.

Post: Reading books, going to the park, spending time together. Laying together, playing together. He likes to tease and he likes to be teased back sometimes. Playing games.

Pre: My favorite thing is to read stories before bed.

Post: We enjoy going for walks and going places together and playing on his gym together. (Change question response): No, not really.

Pre: Oh, we like to go fishing, swimming, camping. We go grocery shopping together. We go out to eat, go to movies. Wherever I go, she pretty much comes along with unless it's going with some friends or something like that.

Post: We read stories together. We play outside. We color. We fish. Go for walks. Shopping a lot. We do a lot together. (Change question response): No.

B. Change:

Pre: We love to read. We love to take our evening bath. We go for walks. I feed him. We play peek-a-boo and hide-and-seek. I think we just basically like to be in the same room with each other.

Post: We love to read. We love to talk, go for walks. I sing my son songs. We look out the window together, um, hug, kiss. I just, it's just very comforting to be near him. Sometimes it's also oppressive if I have a million other things I have to do, but there just, there's just something special about being with him. (Change question response): Yes, because I think his personality has emerged with greater clarity, so that there is a human being, a much more distinctive human being to whom I relate. He's not so much a little baby. He's more of a little person. Sometimes he's still a baby, sometimes he's a little boy, but he's just, he's becoming more and more a small person.

Pre: We like to go to the park. Go on picnics. A lot of outdoor things. In the winter, we like to go sliding or make snowmen.

Post: Well, right now we're outside together everyday. All day long. He likes to ride his bike and show me his new tricks he's learned. Tonight we're going to a movie together. We like to do special things. We have a younger brother that can't do a lot of things so it's frustrating for Bret because he wants to do certain things, and he can't with his little brother around. (Change question response): Um hum. I've become a lot more relaxed. I don't -- I haven't been getting worked up so easily so I can deal with his frustrations a lot easier. So we react to each other a lot better than we did before.

Most of these parents showed little change in the way they spent time interacting with their children. Those who did express change reflected a growing understanding of

developmentally appropriate behavior in their children. Two parents described themselves as becoming more relaxed with their children which contributed to better parent-child interaction.

Question Four

Focus: Strategies of parent-child interaction/parent behavior

Preprogram Questions:

4. We know there are times when most parents feel really full of love for a child and other times when they don't feel so loving.
- What do you do when you want to show your child love?
 - What do you do when you don't feel so loving?

Postprogram Questions:

4. We know there are times when most parents feel really full of love for a child and other times when they don't feel so loving.
- What do you do when you want to show your child love?
 - What do you do when you don't feel so loving?
 - Has the way you express feelings to your child changed in any ways in the last few months

Of the 16 responses to part a of this question, 10 (62.5%) were coded as exhibiting no change, and 6 (37.5%) were coded as reflecting change in the way the parents showed love to their children. Responses to parts b and c reflected 5 (31%) "no change" responses and 11 (69%) showing change in what they did when they did not feel so loving. Examples of "no change" and "change" responses to all parts of the question follow.

Part a:

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: I put my arm on his shoulder or give him a hug, and I tell him that I love him a lot.

Post: I pick him up and give him hugs and kisses.

Pre: Oh, lots of hugs and kisses, and we tell secrets. I'll say I have a secret, and I'll tell her I love her, and she'll say it back or play little games like that.

Post: I hug her, and I tell her I love her, and a lot of times we'll do some quiet time activities together. We'll play Candyland where we'll be real close together.

B. Change:

Pre: I pick him up and hug him and kiss him.

Post: I hug and kiss him. And um, sometimes I just talk to him in a very serious way. I was telling him, for example, this afternoon, I was changing his diaper, and I was telling him about the first time I ever saw him, when he was seventeen weeks old, and discussing with him about that, and he looked a little perplexed. I don't think he quite understood what I was talking about, but it was just a serious conversation, and we'd also been singing "Old McDonald Has a Farm," and I'm, I vary the song, "Old McDonald Has a

Farm in Africa" or "a Farm in Australia," and sometimes I even make up the animals, and today I was mixing up African animals and South American animals, and we were both getting quite involved in this and, ah, it was just very special and very private.

Pre: Well, I tell him I love him, and I hug him a lot. And I'll take him out to do his favorite things, that's another way I show him. That's about it.

Post: What do I do? Let's see, well, usually I think just being, spending time with him and doing all the things I just said, and I like being interested in what he wants to do and taking the time to sit with him and play with him and just basically being there for him is what I think on a daily basis, it's just a daily thing, it's not something specific that I would do I mean besides sometimes I'll do something that's real special like buy him special things. Ah just, basically, just daily, spending time with him.

There was little change expressed in the responses to the first part of this question. As with the non-specific group of parents, giving hugs and kisses was the most common way parents indicated showing love to their children. When change was evident, it was most commonly expressed as spending time together and doing special things together.

Parts b and c:

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: That's tough cause sometimes, like in the evening when we're all tired and he gets pretty whiny, I just make him go to bed. I don't know, I try to be really patient and understand that everybody is just really tired and not to be too hard on them and try to facilitate, or I don't know, get things going in the direction to prevent, um, nasty interactions between all of us.

Post: I go set somewhere away from him and see until he's acting better. (Change/question response): No.

B. Change:

Pre: Yell and scream. Threaten.

Post: It depends on my mood. Sometimes I just -- there's just so much anger in the way that there's a lot of yelling and -- but I try to explain to him why I'm mad at him, but I also tell him that, I'll tell him that I'm angry at him, but I'll also tell him that I love him.

(Change question response): I think so. I think I try to keep reminding him that I love him. There's been so much anger with us lately -- all of us. It's because of what's been going on, with my working and not having the time. I just lose it too easily.

Pre: Depends on the situation. I've gotten so bad where I've given myself "time outs." I've had to remove myself. Either that or I try to get her into something else while I do housework or whatever. I separate us.

Post: I take time out or sometimes, actually, what I do often is I call a friend. When she's bothering me, or I've had my fill or whatever, I get on the phone. (Change question response): Yah. I think I'm probably more verbal because I know she understands a lot more and she can verbalize back to me so I probably use a lot more words rather than just actions.

Pre: I'll let him know. I'll talk to him and tell him I'm angry. Talk to him at his level. Try to explain.

Post: I have lots of trouble being angry with my kids or anyone. I'm not very assertive. I have trouble with this. I just often go away from them when I'm mad. I don't think that's so good. (Change question response): I am better at expressing feelings. I didn't know I had feelings before. Before I always just drank or retreated when I had feelings. I am better now at letting my kids know what I feel. I use "I messages." I try to listen to feelings like you said to. And I'm also trying to figure out what I feel and tell them. Like when I leave the visit, I tell them, "I'm really sad now. I miss you. I hate to leave you." I always pretended it didn't matter before.

Pre: That's hard. Ah, well a lot of times I try to separate us if we get to the point where we're not agreeing on anything. And then I try to find him something to do somewhere else away from me so we can have time to ourselves.

Post: I've gotten better at that. I don't scream and yell as much as I used to. I've learned to be more consistent, and I just separate ourselves instead of getting so angry and just take away the problem, and that's been working a lot better. (Change question response): Yes, especially when I'm angry. Not so much when I'm happy and loving. We've always been the same pretty much with that, but when I'm angry, that has changed a lot. Instead of yelling and getting upset and worked up, I get rid of the problem or separate ourselves from it somehow.

As with the non-specific group of parents, single parents expressed considerable change in the way they responded to their children when they did not feel so loving. Some indicated doing more explaining and verbalization of feelings and less yelling and screaming, often under difficult circumstances. Others indicated separating themselves from their children when they didn't feel so loving or calling a friend.

Question Five

Focus: Strategies of parent-child interaction/parent behavior

Preprogram Question:

5. How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do? (Optional clarifications, if needed: How do you try to get your child to mind you, or obey you, or do what you want?)

Postprogram Questions:

5. How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do? (Optional clarifications, if needed: How do you try to get your child to mind you, or obey you, or do what you want?)
- a. Have your approaches to getting your child to do things changed in any ways in the last few months?

Of the 16 responses to this question, only one (6%) was coded as exhibiting no change, and 15 (94%) were coded as reflecting change in the way parents got their children to do what they wanted them to do.

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: Um, you know, I almost always talk about things and work out some sort of compromise. If he doesn't want to do something, and I ask him how he would like to do it or what he would like to do, and usually we can work something out. He's pretty easy to work with in that way.

Post: I ask him, I ask him to do things, and if he doesn't, then I tell him firmly to do them. He usually does. (Change question response): Nope.

B. Change:

Pre: I just tell him, and most of the time he does it.

Post: I talk to him about it. If he doesn't want to do it, then I threaten a "time out." Sometimes I'd say, I'll close my eyes and count to, ah, some number, and I hope that it, that he, and when I open my eyes, I wanna see that it's done, and it works. He usually, he's a pretty good kid though, he'll do whatever I ask him to. (Change question response): I think there's been a lot fewer "time outs." We usually work things out verbally through some sort of compromise.

Pre: Um I guess the only thing that works is to try to make whatever I need him to do fun. But, uh, I don't always have the patience for that, but that's fairly one thing that works.

Post: If I really want him to do what I want him to do, he, um, I have to be real respectful and, ah, he'll usually do it. Say please. (Change question response): Well, yahh, I ask him to do things before, yah know, just before expecting him to, to say "no" or whatever, I, I'll always ask him and, um, I always ask him and I always try to tell him what we're doing, where we're going and, um, if something's gonna hurt, I tell him it's gonna hurt, and there seems to be a real good trust there.

Pre: Expectations mostly. From the very beginning she knows or is supposed to know what's expected of her, and when she doesn't fulfill that, she gets "time outs."

Post: Give her choices. Choices of things that I want. She can still have the choice, but they are two choices that I want, either one I'd be satisfied with. (Change question response): I think on the whole I'm more tolerant or more understanding of what she's going through so that I can wait longer. You know, like when I'm waiting for her to decide or maybe even the times that I do give her choices, instead of saying, "This is what we're going to do."

Pre: Well, I don't know if I'm the best person to ask that. I'm not real effective with that. A lot of times we end up in a power struggle over it. But normally I'll have to do the same thing. Just make him go to his room to prevent myself from screaming and yelling, you know. I have to make him go to his room until he decides he's going to do what I want him to do.

Post: Well, I count to three. It works for him, so I just keep doing it. He, well, if he doesn't want to do it, he's really stubborn. Very stubborn. So until, before I get mad, I just do that. I just count to three, and he does it. Whether he wants to or not, he will do it then. But if I don't do that and just keep arguing with him, we'll just get too mad, so that's what I do. (Change question response): Yahh. For one, I think before I decide he needs to do this or that. I think about it first. I think, "Is this really necessary, or can this just slide?" If I know this is something we're going to argue about, I think, "Is this an important thing or is this something that we can just let go?" Instead of, you know, right away jumping on him to do this or do that. I've been trying to sit back and think about it first.

The single parent group expressed extensive change in the way they got their children to do what they wanted them to do. They indicated using fewer "time outs;" giving choices; using more explanations and discussion; being more respectful, sensitive, and patient; and thinking first before acting.

Question Six

Focus: Strategies of parent-child interaction/parent behavior

Preprogram and Postprogram Question (same for both):

6. What do you do when your child is angry?

Of the 16 responses to this question, 8 (50%) were coded as exhibiting no change, and 8 (50%) were coded as reflecting change in what they did when their children were angry.

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: Well, again that depends, too, on if she's throwing things or hitting, she gets "time out," because that's unacceptable, but if she is angry and not hurting or not throwing, then I just let her be. It's okay for her to be angry. She gets angry a lot, and that's okay. I usually leave.

Post: Well, see, that again depends on my mood. Generally, I tell her she can calm down. She knows how to calm herself down, and she needs to calm down, and then I give her some, not distractions, but other choices of what she can do instead. "If you're mad, you can do this or this." If it's really bad, we separate.

Pre: That's a tough one. A lot of time I, I don't let him be angry. I, um, I have to, I work hard at trying to just allow him to be angry and say, "You're having a hard time, aren't you?" or "You're angry at me," or at whatever. Um, and I, I've had times when I just get tired of listening to him cry, and I tell him, "It's okay to cry, but I want you to do it in another room."

Post: Well, it depends on where we are. I sometimes let him be angry if he's at home, and let him go ahead and get it all out, and if we're out somewhere, I'll take him out of the room and try to get him calmed down.

Although there were slight differences in some of the "no change" responses to this question before and after program participation, such as in the two examples above, parent explanations such as these reflected little change in the way they dealt with their children's anger. Some of these "no change" responses were developmentally appropriate and showed no need for change.

B. Change:

Pre: I usually hug her.

Post: The other night she didn't want to come home from Grandma's, and she screamed at me and hit me, about 15 times she just kept hitting me. So what did I do? I changed the subject. I said, "If you stay at Grandma's, you don't get to go to McDonalds for supper, and if you come home with me, you do." I said we could go get movies and spend time together. Then she just said she was sorry and loved me. Usually when she's naughty, if I just change the subject and spoil her a little bit, then she forgets it. And I think that's better than yelling at them and sending them to their room cause they're just gonna be sad. I just don't think it should be such an issue -- that parents spank their kids and send them to their room for so many things.

Pre: I tell him it's okay to be angry, that that's his feeling. I encourage him to show all his feelings. I support him, and we sit and talk.

Post: I have trouble with angry feelings. I let him be angry, but I know I sort of go away. I try to support him and listen to him. I feel kind of guilty because -- no, lots of guilt -- because I get really sad and know I am the reason he's so angry. I let him punch things and stomp around. Is that okay? I don't let him hit the other kids. I stop that now. I didn't used to.

Pre: Um, I just try to get through the situation that's angered him. Often times it involves getting him dressed or changing his diaper or putting him in the car seat if he doesn't want it, and I simply get him clean and changed, I get him dressed, and once the car gets going, he's just fine. I simply recognize the validity of his feelings but also my responsibility to do what has to be done.

Post: Well, it depends. Sometimes it, I try to determine if the anger is justified. And that was again something we talked about in ECFE. To understand his emotions and respect them. And I, and I try to. Um, and sometimes his anger is reasonable. And I try to communicate that I understand that, and sometimes it's just that he's being tired or tantrummy, and then I, I have to, I think, redirect him toward regaining control. Um, move away from the anger as opposed to stopping and looking at it and saying, "Well this is understandable, this is alright. I think tantrum anger is, is not necessarily understandable or alright, and we don't need to stop and dwell on it and communicate about it, but move away from it.

A wide range of change was evident in the "change" responses to this question, as reflected in the responses above. Some parents, such as in the first "change" example above, showed change in the way they thought about dealing with their children's anger but were using some approaches that were not always developmentally appropriate. Other parents showed more qualitative change in the way they thought about their responses to their children's anger as in the last example above. This parent exhibited extensive thought underlying the approach she took to responding to her child's anger.

Question Seven

Focus: Strategies of parent-child interaction/parent behavior

The following transition statement was made between questions six and seven during both the preprogram and postprogram interviews:

Okay, we've been talking a lot about your child and what you do with your child. Now I'd like to ask you to think some about yourself as a parent. We've found that most parents have some things they feel they do well as a parent, and some things they don't feel they do so well.

Preprogram Question:

7. a. What do you think you do well as a parent?
b. What do you not do so well as a parent?

Postprogram Question:

7. a. What do you think you do well as a parent?
b. In your interview at the beginning of the program you were asked what you didn't do well as a parent. You said: "_____". How do you feel about that now?

Of the 16 responses to part a of this question, 3 (19%) were coded as exhibiting no change, and 13 (81%) were coded as reflecting change in what parents thought they did well as a parent. Responses to parts b reflected 4 (25%) "no change" responses and 12 (75%) showing change in what they thought they did not do so well as a parent. Examples of "no change" and "change" responses to both parts of the question follow.

Part a:

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: Well, I do show my kids a lot of love. And I try, I'm with them all the time. You know, I don't have an outside job. I spend a lot of time with them. I think I do well with that.

Post: Well, I think I spend a lot of time with them. I'm with them all the time, and we do a lot together. You know we're together all the time, whether they're outdoors or indoors. I think that's probably what I do best. I guess I'm just there.

Spending time with their children was a typical "no change" response to what parents did well as parents.

B. Change:

Pre: I have a lot of patience, but I'm losing it. In fact, a lot of people have told me I have a lot of patience, that they would not have been able to put up with what I do and then maybe that's part of the reasons I got the problems I got.

Post: Sometimes I don't feel like I do anything well. I don't know. I think, I usually think I have patience, but I think I'm losing that. I'm becoming more consistent which I think has helped with you coming -- getting me to think. I still have got to work on that though -- consistency. I love him a lot. I can show him that.

Pre: This is such a difficult time, but, uh, I guess I feel like I listen to her when she comes. I make a real effort to read a story, just to do things together. Then on the other hand, it doesn't always work out the best cause of my rotating schedule, and that bothers, sometimes, especially now when my wife's not around, but hopefully that will work itself out. Then at the same time, like any other parents, the patience just isn't there all the time. You get home, you're tired. You like to have a little time for yourself.

Post: I guess I've got patience, for the most part. When there's time with the shift work that I do, I do spend time with her, so I guess I've always made the time for her when she's wanted something.

Pre: Spend a lot of time with her, a lot of time with her. I love playing with her so I get to be around her a lot. And I keep her clean and well dressed and happy and content.

Post: Um, well, that's a hard one. I think that I can actually play with her instead of putting her in front of a TV and, um, I don't know, just patient with her a lot and, ah, I don't spank her at a young age. My mom tried to do that to her, and I yelled at her. She said it doesn't hurt cause she's got a diaper on, but it could just hurt her feelings. So I yelled at my mom for that. I watch over her real well, and I know she's gonna grow up happy. I know it.

Most of the parents in this group indicated change in what they thought they were doing well as a parent along with frustrations that they were not able to do as well as they might. They indicated working on being more patient and more consistent in their discipline, avoiding spanking, stopping and thinking more before acting, and giving time to their children.

Part b:

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: I have trouble with being consistent with the discipline. That's hard.

Post: I still think I'm kinda frustrated at times, but then I kinda wonder when things seem to be out of balance whether you're going to one extreme or to the other either using it not enough or else too much.

An area where parents in this group indicated no change in what they felt they did not do well as a parent was consistency in discipline.

B. Change:

Pre: Discipline. Let her get away with things.

Post: I don't think I was feeling that it's not right that I let her get away with things, but I meant I'll change the subject and somehow make her happy by forgetting it. I felt I wasn't sending her to her room like most parents do, but since I've been here, I feel better about it, that what I was doing is okay.

Pre: Ah, again, I'd have to say discipline. I'm not -- sometimes I'm not as patient as I should be. I don't, I might have a short, short temper.

Post: I feel a lot better. A lot better. One thing I learned was too, uh, instead of yelling and getting angry, to sit back and think about it. You know, like I said, "Is this worth getting angry about or should, you know, is it that important that he puts this certain shirt on or something or can he just wear what he's got and just let it go?" So I've become a lot more relaxed and not so strict on everything. That's helped me out a lot -- instead of just keep yelling at him or spanking him or something.

Pre: This is endless right now. I think I, sometimes it's really hard for me to take a step back, and "This is just what two year olds do." It, it's real easy for me to lose it sometimes with her when she's done the same thing over and over and like everybody, and right now that's where I have the hardest time.

Post: I think that I or would like to think that I've grown and that stuff that she does over and over I can understand now that it's a part of the age or a part of her, and I can detach the behavior from her so it's not annoying.

Pre: Discipline. I've always felt the kids should run and have fun while they're young.

Post: I think I am better at discipline now. I see discipline as love and not abuse. I see that the lack of discipline I did before was part of my being neglectful with the children. I still want them to have fun, but now I know how unsafe they feel without limits. I remember that from my childhood.

Discipline was the main area where parents indicated seeing change in what they thought they did not do well as a parent when they entered the program. They reflected being aware of a wider range of discipline approaches, feeling better about the approaches they were using, having clearer developmental expectations and changed perceptions of their children, being more relaxed, and thinking before acting as a way of avoiding such behaviors as yelling and getting angry with their children.

Question Eight

Focus: Family Life and Interaction

Preprogram and Postprogram Questions (same for both):

8. Now let's switch to your family life more generally. At times we all like some things about family life and dislike some things.
- What do you like about your family life?
 - When you have a problem with your family life, maybe something you don't like about your family or something you want to change, what do you do?

Of the 16 responses to part a of this question, 9 (56%) were coded as exhibiting no change, and 7 (44%) were coded as reflecting change in what parents liked about their family life. Responses to parts b reflected 7 (44%) "no change" responses and 9 (56%) showing change in what they did when they had a problem with family life. Examples of "no change" and "change" responses to both parts of the question follow.

Part a:

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: Just, ah, just doing things together. Being together. Doing things we like to do. Going to church, the zoo.

Post: I guess just having time to do things together as a family.

Pre: That we can spend so much time together. That we're kinda like buddies. We like the same kinds of things. There's that togetherness. I guess we kinda pal around.

Post: I like that we can spend a lot of time together and that we're close.

Pre: Just me and my daughter? Oh, I like the times when we just impromptu, just go out and get a hamburger somewhere -- off the cuff type deals, where all of a sudden, out of the blue she'll come up and give me a hug and a kiss and say, "I love you, Daddy." Things like that I enjoy doing.

Post: I just like being together. Doing things whether it be inside or outside.

B. Change:

Pre: The responsibility. Having to have someone to be responsible for has made me more responsible.

Post: That there's always someone there, or ninety percent of the time there's always someone there. They're just wonderful.

Pre: I really like my new situation of having my own space and, um, having control. I'm the one that makes decisions about things regarding my family. And I really like having my kids in my life, and I don't know. That's about it.

Post: I love the togetherness and the doing things together. And, ah, having someone to love.

Most of the parent responses to this question reflected little or no change. Being together and doing things together was what most parents liked best about their families. The change responses reflected only small differences and tended to include additional thoughts parents added in response to this question at the second interview.

Part b:

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: Sometimes I'll take it up with the children's counselor or bring it up with any of them over at Early Childhood, or with you.

Post: Try to get other opinions.

Pre: Well, you know, being just me, I never thought of it that way. As far as change, I guess I want to change and make a good attempt to do it, then as far as change, maybe talk it over with friends and maybe friends or family, maybe they can help me out.

Post: I talk it over amongst family and friends and try to get their ideas and go from there.

Pre: With him I can't sit down and tell him what is wrong. But generally with anyone else, sit down and discuss it and work ways to change it.

Post: I found it's best to confront it. Sit down and say, "This is what's happening. This is what I don't like, and can we change it?"

All parents expressing "no change" in their responses to this question indicated having family, friends, or other people with whom they could talk over problems, and they continued to use these people as resources to help them deal with family problems.

B. Change:

Pre: I guess I try to think of what would be best for the kids first. Even though I do know I have to do things for myself, too. Right now they're going through a hard time. I'm trying to get them through first, and then myself second. Still working on that.

Post: Talk to people. You know, if I have a problem I have friends I can talk to and my group I went to. The single parents -- that was great. We talked a lot. That helped me a lot. Just talking with people that have the same problems or similar problems and what they did to work it out. And you find a lot of answers that way. Just by talking to people.

Pre: We sit at a table and discuss it. Maybe there can be changes made.

Post: Now when we have a problem we sit and discuss, but I need outside support to help me. I take problems to my A.A. group, to my social worker, to you.

Pre: I talk to people, I guess, and I kind of ask questions, and I listen to what other people have done to solve their problems.

Post: Change it. I think I've come to the point now where I don't just sit back and think it'll all get better somehow, but I actually do something about it.

Most of the parents expressing change in response to this question indicated finding people to talk with who had common problems as their best resources for dealing with family problems. Some indicated taking action rather than merely discussing a problem as the best way to address family problems.

Question Nine

Focus: Parent Self-Care

Preprogram Question:

9. As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself?

Postprogram Questions:

9. As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself?

a. Has the way you take care of yourself changed in any way in the last few months?

Of the 16 responses to this question, 4 (25%) were coded as exhibiting no change, and 12 (75%) were coded as reflecting change in the way parents took care of themselves.

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: Um, that's a good question, something I've been thinking about a lot recently. I'd like to, well, I wrote down a list of all the things that, that I would like to be spending my time doing and things that are nurturing to me. And some of those things include doing yoga, which I try to do fairly often. And um, reading and walking and I have a, I won a membership at a health spa, so I go there once in a while, sit in the sauna and go swimming. And I like to write.

Post: I pretty much the way I always have I guess. Everyday usual things. (Change question response): No.

B. Change:

Pre: Well, that's real difficult. If I get to take a half hour bath once a week, that's nice. And that's a treat. I don't get a lot of time. Oh, one thing I do is I get them to bed early so that I do have a couple hours before I go to bed for just myself.

Post: Well, that's hard. We put the kids to bed early. And I do put them to bed early, early enough that I have a couple of hours every evening to myself. If things get real frustrating I do have a network in my neighborhood that we take turns watching each other's kids so that we can have some time to ourselves, too. Even just to go grocery shopping. Sometimes you really don't want to bring them with you. (Change question response): Maybe not really changed how I talk care of myself. I'm just more relaxed. I feel better. I don't feel as stressed in the evening. So I just feel more relaxed, and it's easier for me to wind down.

Pre: I don't. That's a problem, too. I don't.

Post: Well, work. Sometimes work is a good escape. I do have TV shows that I watch. That's my time. I guess that's it for now. (Change question response): Maybe not in actually doing anything, but maybe in mind set where I'm thinking more along the lines of, "Yah, it's okay for me to take time out to do something for me rather than this needs to be done and that needs to be done." Yah, I may not have actually taken the steps, but I'm at the point that it's okay for me to do them.

Pre: I wanna take time to go fishing. I live for the fall, for pheasant hunting and grouse hunting, deer hunting. That's always been my time of the year to let go and cut loose. I figure the rest of the year I can kinda hang tight to home, go to movies, go out with friends. That's what I do for me.

Post: I get out, and I fish. I go out with my friends. I do hunting. Just sometimes just drop her off at the day care and get away for the day. As a single parent, you've got to do that. There's no other choice. (Change question response): I'm not so hard on myself as I was maybe in January or February. Just physically and mentally feeling better.

Pre: Sometimes I think I just have to let certain things slide. And then just go to bed early and get your rest so you can cope when you think you're gonna not be able to handle stress very well. Just kinda take time out or find someone else to watch the kids once in a while. Sometimes Mom doesn't get a break.

Post: Oh, I like to sit and curl up with a book. (Change question response): I kinda find myself reevaluating the circumstances to find out how I can make more time for myself. Or go out for a walk or something like that.

Pre: I treat myself to little things. I go shopping. One day I take a walk by myself. That kind of stuff.

Post: I am learning to take care of myself. I used to take care of myself by drinking and going to the bars. That, of course, really worked cruddy. I now go to meetings, talk to people, go for walks, try not to isolate. I also try to feel about things. I am going to start doing counseling on my sexual abuse. I think that is a big factor in my drinking. I think that would be better self-care. (Change question response): I am better at it. After treatment, ECFE, and work at the halfway house (for chemical dependency treatment) I am doing better. I try to talk about things right away rather than stuffing them. I am being more assertive. I have a nicer boyfriend now who is not abusive to me. That's good. I worry, though, will it last? I have a job, and I like it. It is a job doing nurse aide, and I like it. I am good at it, and they like me there. I am going to move back by my kids soon. I hope I can find good groups there. I'm not going back to drinking again.

Many of the parents indicating change in their responses to this question were taking both minor and major steps to do a better job of taking care of themselves. For some it meant as much a change in attitude as a change in actual time for themselves. For others it meant major life changes. All single parents interviewed indicated that this was an important area for them, and many of their responses reflected their having given considerable thought to this issue. The group of single parents interviewed may actually have been doing better in this area than the other parents interviewed because it is something single parents have to more consciously think about and plan for.

QUESTION TEN

Focus: Perceived Changes in Parent, Child, and Family

Postprogram Questions Only:

10. What changes, if any, have you noted in your child or family from participating in this program?
 - a. What are the main things you yourself have gotten from participating in the program?

As indicated with the responses of the non-specific group of parents, these final questions were the only questions that were designed to directly seek parents' thoughts as to what role the program played in changes in themselves, their children, and/or their families since they began program participation. All of the responses to these questions by the 16 single parents interviewed indicated change. Their responses reflected 37 different change statements, 26 reflecting change in themselves as parents and 11 reflecting change in their children. The same types of change were noted in these parents as were noted with the non-specific group of parents. By far the most frequent type of parent change indicated was that of increased feelings of support from others, followed by changes in parent behavior, knowledge and understanding, self-confidence, and perceptions and expectations for themselves as parents and for their children. Most of the child changes noted by these

parents focused on changes in their children's social relationships and skills. Examples of the changes expressed follow.

Increased feelings of support from others:

- I think it's been good for us to have this. It's a support structure for us in addition to the other supports that we have. It's been helpful.
- The support -- somebody to talk to that knows what it's like.
- Meeting with other people who have the same problems and the same anxieties, the same fears and the same joys, intensifies my sense of joy in what I do and how I do it. I discovered a peer group. I need to be with other parents who confirm me in the same role, and that's one thing that ECFE has done for me.
- People to talk to and learn from.
- Now I have a lot more people I can call, made some friends.
- That I'm not alone. That all parents go through the same kinds of things.
- I've made some friends, so I can call when we have problems or get together.
- Friends. I learned a lot from the others. They all, everyone had similar problems or similar concerns or similar joys. It was fun to listen to them and learn from them or just all figure out something together -- a problem. It was nice to come and be able to just talk about anything. Whatever was concerning you and just talk about it. Everyone helped each other figure out an answer. It was really great.

Changes in parent behavior:

- I kind of just watch, yah know, the way that they take care of her and how they treat her and stuff and see how she responds, and then it kind of helps me, yah know, knowing how to talk to her and how to deal with things that come up like, if she were going towards trouble or something, what would they do?
- I have become a better parent, discipline and stuff. I know how to love better. I know about boundaries. I don't shame my kids like I used to before.

Changes in parent knowledge and understanding:

- The kinds of information that I have been able to collect there about discipline, nutrition and safety, and, ah, just how you cope with certain problems.
- I'm learning a lot about parenthood.
- Um, a better knowledge base of what's normal and what's not normal.

Changes in parent self-confidence:

- It made me feel better about the way I was doing, felt like I was doing things right. It reinforced what I thought.
- Many of my own feelings and instincts have been confirmed, in a professional sense, from other professionals. I have felt very comfortable both in terms of what I'm doing, how I'm doing it, and also, the significance, the importance of our participation in the program.
- I think I'm more confident, and I'm, I know that, um, I'm normal and my child's normal, especially with the biting thing, that was really a hard time. A lot of people really, um, label your kid and label the mom and that was, yah know, more pressure. I just got a lot of validation here.
- I think we both feel more secure, we're both less frightened.

Changes in parent perceptions and expectations for themselves as parents and for their children:

- Just a lot of support for a lot of things I already believed in as far as parenting goes, and kind of trouble shooting over problems like potty training and behavioral things such as tantrums and stuff like that which I had a real problem with. They've really helped me like see the way he looks at the world and things like that and so it's made it a lot easier to deal with that, when things like that come up now, I, it's like, "Oh, this stuff everybody goes through," and I can kind of handle it a lot better. Not get upset or take it so personally like I might of if I'd never talked to anybody about anything.
- You know they, every child is unique in their own respect, but yet the problems and the things they go through are so common. To have someone to speak to about it and say it happens to me, too, and this is how you deal with it. It's wonderful.
- I've learned a lot about relaxing and enjoying the children instead of it being so difficult.

Child changes in social relationships and skills:

- I think Missy can play better with kids. I'm so amazed the way she plays so good here. It makes me feel better cause I was worried about cause she's always by herself, when she'd go to school that she would be rotten and not share and want everything. But I think she does excellent here, so that's helped.
- My son learning more things and being able to deal with other kids.
- He's just like a totally different child, and part of that's because he's getting older, but a big part of it is because of working with the teachers here I think. He plays with other little kids so well compared to like six months ago, even four months ago. I mean he just, yah know, sharing, and well, for instance, our neighbor comes over, and when we first moved in, they couldn't be in the same room together for more than a few minutes. And now they sit and they put their arms around each other, and I mean, he really just knows, his level of communicating with his peers has just improved drastically.
- He's become much more willing to deal with other people.
- I think it's helped with her socialization skills.

Teen Parent Results

The following results are based on the responses of the eleven teen parents interviewed who participated in classes specifically for teen parents. These teen parents represented four of the 24 programs involved in the study. Teen parent responses to all questions were coded as reflecting either:

- A. No pre-post change
- B. Change

The number and percentage of "no change" and "change" responses to each question are listed in Table 6 in descending order from highest to lowest percent of response change. The teen parents showed less change overall than the other two groups of parents, and their responses indicated the need for longer program involvement as an opportunity for them to show more extensive change in knowledge, perceptions, and behaviors. As with the other two parent groups, the teen parents indicated the most change in answer to question ten which asked them to directly express changes in themselves, their children, or their families after up to a year of program participation. They also exhibited high percentages of change in response to the questions of what they did well or not so well as parents. Other high percentages of change were noted in their responses to the questions about what they did when they did not feel so loving toward their children and what they did to get their children to do what they wanted them to do. Consistent with the responses of the single parents, they showed the least change in what they did to show their children love.

Examples of responses to each question in each of the two code categories of "no change" and "change" follow along with discussion of the results.

Questions One and Two

Focus: Knowledge of Child Development

Preprogram and Postprogram Questions (same for both):

1. Tell me a little about your child. What is your child like? (Probe, if needed: What are some of the things your child is doing these days?)
2. Okay, your child is _____ years old. What are _____ year olds like? (Probe, if needed: What stands out to you about _____ year olds?)

Of the 11 responses to these two questions, 6 (54.5%) were coded as exhibiting no change, and 5 (45.5%) were coded as reflecting change in knowledge of children and how they develop.

Table 6

Number and Percent of "No Change" and "Change" Responses by Question in Teen Parent Group

QUESTION	NO CHANGE		CHANGE		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
(10) What changes, if any, have you noted in your child or family from participating in the program?	0	0.0	24	100.0	24	100.0
(7a) What do you think you do well as a parent?	2	18.0	9	82.0	11	100.0
(7b) What do you not do so well as a parent?	2	18.0	9	82.0	11	100.0
(4b) What do you do when you don't feel so loving?	4	36.0	7	64.0	11	100.0
(4c) Has the way you express feelings to your child changed in any way in the last few months?	4	36.0	7	64.0	11	100.0
(5) How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do?	4	36.0	7	64.0	11	100.0
(5a) Have your approaches in getting your child to do things changed in any ways in the last few months?	4	36.0	7	64.0	11	100.0
(3) What do you and your child enjoy doing together?	5	45.5	6	54.5	11	100.0
(3a) Has the way you spend time together changed in any way in the last few months?	5	45.5	6	54.5	11	100.0
(6) What do you do when your child is angry?	5	45.5	6	54.5	11	100.0
(1) Tell me a little about your child. What is your child like?	6	54.5	5	45.5	11	100.0
(2) Okay, your child is __ years old. What are __ year olds like?	6	54.5	5	45.5	11	100.0
(8a) What do you like about your family?	6	54.5	5	45.5	11	100.0
(8b) When you have a problem with your family life--maybe something you don't like about your family or something you want to change--what do you do?	6	54.5	5	45.5	11	100.0
(9) As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself?	6	54.5	5	45.5	11	100.0
(9a) Has the way you take care of yourself changed in any way in the last few months?	6	54.5	5	45.5	11	100.0
(4a) We know there are times when most parents feel really full of love for a child and other times when they don't feel so loving. What do you do when you want to show your child love?	11	100.0	0	0.0	11	100.0
TOTALS	59	41.0	86	59.0	145	100.0

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: I dunno. She's really good. I've got it easy. I know my niece, you know Jennie? That kid, man, you couldn't get that kid to sleep through the night, but she's been sleeping through the night since she was born. I dunno. I got lucky, and I'm happy about it.

Post: They like to get into everything like, like to be right on the TV, and you know, that drives me nuts, and my mom is always saying, "Get away from the TV," you know, cause I know kids that have hurt their eyes from being in front of the TV. She gets right up there, and she blocks the screen, and I can't see. She drives me nuts sometimes about that and getting into paper and eating it. Otherwise I don't mind.

Pre: She's 9 1/2 months old. She was born two days before Christmas. That was my Christmas present last year. She's extremely well behaved. She started sleeping through the night when she was three months old, and she's just a good kid. She's very happy. She wakes up with a smile and goes to bed with a smile.

Post: She's getting a real attitude. She's real loving towards me and Greg and Nicki especially. And when I got home, I didn't ask for a hug, she just came over to the chair and put her arms around me and gave me a hug and kiss and sat and watched TV with me. She's getting into lots of trouble lately. She learned to say "Shit," so we're trying to stop ourselves with that cause that's the only time she says it if she hears us say it first.

These examples and the other responses in this category reflected little knowledge and understanding of children and how they develop, and there was little or no change in the parents' knowledge level. These parents did not appear to have an understanding of typical developmental changes from infancy to toddlerhood and, therefore, they saw their children in a more negative light as they grew older and engaged in greater exploration of their world. Responses such as these indicate the need for teen parents to have longer involvement in programs where they will have more opportunities to better understand their children and how they can appropriately respond to their changing needs.

B. Change:

Pre: Well, she likes to play. She likes to go with me everywhere I go. She likes to be with me, and she also likes to go over to her grandmother's house on the weekends. There's a lot of things to tell you about her. She'll be two on November 22. She likes to watch TV because she watches the cartoons, and she likes to help me wash dishes and clean up and make up her bed. She likes to take her baby to sleep with her at night when she goes to bed, and she likes to give her baby a bath when she takes a bath. That's about it.

Post: She's two. She loves attention, and when she sees I'm not giving her any, she'll make sure that I am giving her the attention that she wants. For instance, the other day I was holding my other baby, and she started crying for her bottle, and I was going to fix it. I told her to wait a second, let me get the baby's bottle, and she took the plant, and she knocked it off the table. I told her not to do that, and she was mad. Then she sat by me, and gave me a hug, and then she was okay. She loves to play with her dolls and her certain pillow she likes to have when she goes to sleep. Sometimes her sister has it, and she gets mad, and I have to give her her pillow and switch them. She loves cartoons, Bugs Bunny. She doesn't eat like I want her to, but she loves eggs and toast, not too much

meat. Likes chicken and hot dogs, and she don't like hamburger. Two year olds like to have their way. What's theirs is theirs, and they don't want anyone else to bother what's theirs. They like to experience new things. I think they like to learn ABC's, numbers, people to talk to them so their language is better. She likes to put her clothes on, wash herself off.

Pre: LaQuita is 14 months. She imitates a lot, and she likes to do things like everybody else does, say different things. Learning her how to talk. She likes to walk around and get into everything and that's about it.

Post: She's 20 months now. They are very independent! She likes to do everything on her own. Even if she can't, she still has to try. She's learning and doing a lot more things. She's talking a lot better. I can understand her more. It's clearer, and she can put two and three words together.

Responses in this category showed teen parents who were growing both in their knowledge and understanding of their own children and in their knowledge and understanding of child development in general.

Question Three

Focus: Parent-child interaction activities and behaviors

Preprogram Question:

3. What do you and your child enjoy doing together?

Post program Question:

3. What do you and your child enjoy doing together?

a. Has the way you spend time together changed in any way in the last few months?

Of the 11 responses to these two questions, 5 (45.5%) were coded as exhibiting no change, and 6 (54.5%) were coded as reflecting change in the way parents spent time together with their children.

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: Well, he likes, I like playing with the rattle, and he can hold on good and likes the sound of it, and he starts laughing and playing with the rattle.

Post: Sing songs. Play games and peek-a-boo. I chase him when he crawls.

B. Change:

Pre: Holdin' each other. Sleep.

Post: Playing. If you play with his toys with him, he is more interested, or he likes to go outside and just look around. We like doing that. Take him to the park. (Change question response): Yeah, because he is older. When he was little, he didn't really do anything, and he cried a lot. Now he is older, and he likes to play a lot which is nice. He changed a lot. I like the way he is now better.

Pre: Well, I just like sitting there mainly and talking to her, try and have a conversation. She likes to play on the telephone. Her favorite word is "Hi."

Post: Taking baths together. (Change question response): It's been a lot harder with trying to finish school.

Pre: Watching her swing. She loves her swing, man, so I just throw her in there whenever. She has a good old time, and I talk to her, and yah know, I like bounce her around. She has a good time. She has fun, I guess. She laughs, too. It's like she laughs, yah know, sometimes, and it's really cute.

Post: Walking, playing, and putting her to sleep, I don't know. (Change question response): Yeah, she screams a lot longer when you try to get to bed, to go to bed. When I been putting her to bed now and let her cry herself to sleep, then I feel so bad, it is horrible. I don't know, I guess that is about it. We go outside a lot more, too. That is so much fun.

Most of the parent responses to this questions, whether indicating change or not, reflected parents who enjoyed playing with their children in mostly developmentally appropriate activities. Where change was indicated, it usually reflected change in play activities due to the children's development. As the examples above indicate, some of the changes were not viewed as positive. Some parents had less time to play with their children because of school demands, and some found negative changes in their interactions with their children associated with developmental changes in their children to which they were not sure how to respond.

Question Four

Focus: Strategies of parent-child interaction/parent behavior

Preprogram Questions:

4. We know there are times when most parents feel really full of love for a child and other times when they don't feel so loving.
 - a. What do you do when you want to show your child love?
 - b. What do you do when you don't feel so loving?

Postprogram Questions:

4. We know there are times when most parents feel really full of love for a child and other times when they don't feel so loving.
 - a. What do you do when you want to show your child love?
 - b. What do you do when you don't feel so loving?
 - c. Has the way you express feelings to your child changed in any ways in the last few months?

Of the 11 responses to part a of this question, all 11 (100%) were coded as exhibiting no change in the way the parents showed love to their children. Responses to parts b and c reflected 4 (36%) "no change" responses and 7 (64%) showing change in what they did when they did not feel so loving. Examples of "no change" and "change" responses to all parts of the question follow.

Part a:

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: Well, I hug him and hold him and kiss him.

Post: I hug and k'ss and talk to him.

Pre: I just grab her and kiss her all over, and I just like to hold her all the time and just rock her.

Post: I grab her and hug her, and I just wrestle with her and hold her.

Pre: I don't know. I mean she knows I love her. I talk to her. I tell her, and I think she understands it, or sometimes I'll just sit with her, be with her, and talk to her or read her a story, I mean I play with her.

Post: I sit with her, I tell her. She knows, she understands. I'll put her in my lap. When I tell her I love her she'll tell me right back, "I love you, too."

All responses in this category indicated no change. These parents were consistent in the way they showed love to their children, and it did not change. As with all other parents interviewed, physical expressions, especially hugs and kisses, and some verbal expressions were the most common parent responses.

Parts b and c:

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: Sometimes I, I kiss him and hug him anyways, but other times I just, uh, let my mom handle him for awhile.

Post: Usually I just send him to my mom. That's his grandma.

B. Change:

Pre: I don't ever get that mad at her. When I do, I mean it's nothing. I don't do anything. I'm just mad. I don't get very mad at her. I mean whereas I have to say, "Tina, please," you know, something like that. I don't get that mad.

Post: I'll just tell her I'm tired. Like if she's doing something, I'll tell her to please stop. She'll feel sorry for me and lean on me and say "Mommy's tired," and she'll talk to me.

Pre: Well, I never really don't feel so loving to her. She never do anything to make me feel like that yet. Like when she be throwing a fit and stuff, then I always end up picking her up. I've never got that mad at her before.

Post: When I'm mad I don't do anything to her. I give her to her dad.

Pre: I still tell him that Mom's in a bad mood today, but I still love you.

Post: I used to cry, but now I just talk to him and tell him.

Pre: Sometimes I get really frustrated, especially on her sick days, but what I basically do is, "Go to grandma," or something like that. But I don't, I try not to express any kind of anger or other frustration.

Post: I tell her I'm in a bad mood. I usually tell her I am mad at her, and I explain why I'm mad at her. (Change question response): No. She tries to hit me, so me and her have been going through spankings a lot. I try to change her, but she just won't listen, and I spank her hands.

Several "no change" and "change" responses indicated that a grandmother or other family member was present to help when the parents did not feel so loving toward their children. Several change responses indicated more verbalization with their children as they got older. The last example of change shows a parent who was moving to more negative forms of interaction in dealing with her not so loving feelings as her child grew older and was more of a challenge to her. She clearly lacked an understanding of developmental changes and how to effectively respond to them.

Question Five

Focus: Strategies of parent-child interaction/parent behavior

Preprogram Question:

5. How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do? (Optional clarifications, if needed: How do you try to get your child to mind you, or obey you, or do what you want?)

Postprogram Questions:

5. How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do? (Optional clarifications, if needed: How do you try to get your child to mind you, or obey you, or do what you want?)
- a. Have your approaches to getting your child to do things changed in any ways in the last few months?

Of the 11 responses to this question, 4 (36%) were coded as exhibiting no change, and 7 (64%) were coded as reflecting change in what the parents did to get their children to do what they wanted them to do.

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: I really don't do nothing.

Post: I'll ask her. She usually does. If she don't, she don't. (Change question response): No, not really.

B. Change:

Pre: I try reasoning first, and if that doesn't work, I usually send her to her room or tell her "No."

Post: I ask her, and if she says, "No," then either I go do it or I tell her to go to her room if it's something that she needs to do. Usually I let her out of her room. Then she'll do whatever it is. (Change question response): Before I guess I just sent her to her room

when she didn't do whatever I wanted her to do, and now I talk things out with her first and see if she'll just listen to me.

Pre: When I want her to go to sleep I just sit there and talk to her and listen to some music and she sometimes goes to sleep, or I just sit there and watch TV, and she'll fall asleep. And I'll be talking to her and just have fun with her. Sometimes she understands me.

Post: I can't get her to do what I want her to do, but I can stop her from doing what I don't want her to do, like when I see her in her walker, and she's headed for a glass. I call her, I tell her, "No. Stop and come see what I want." She'll see me playing with something. She'll come and take it away from me. When I tell her to come here, that's when I get her to play with me to distract her. (Change question response): Yes, she understands more as she gets older. It's easier.

Pre: When she does something wrong, I discipline her, hit her on the hand cause she knows what she's touched is wrong, or whatever, and some days she's just naughty, and so I'll just put her in her crib with a bottle and tell her, "No. That wasn't right."

Post: It depends on the situation cause I talk to her. Sometimes she doesn't listen -- the thing with her hand when she tries to hit me, and I will hit her on her hand, and she will be like, "Why did you do that?" and I will say, "You don't hit Mommy." (Change question response): It depends on the situation. Now I spank her. Before I wouldn't spank her, but now she knows what she can do and what she can't do.

The change responses to this question showed parents who were using more verbalizations and distraction to get their children to do what they wanted them to do as they noticed developmental change and changed their responses accordingly. As with the last question, the last example of change shows a parent who was moving from hand slapping to spanking to try to get her child to do what she wanted her to do as her child grew older and was more of a challenge to her. She also did not have a good understanding of developmental change and how to respond appropriately to it.

Question Six

Focus: Strategies of parent-child interaction/parent behavior

Preprogram and Postprogram Question (same for both):

6. What do you do when your child is angry?

Of the 11 responses to this question, 5 (45.5%) were coded as exhibiting no change, and 6 (54.5%) were coded as reflecting change in what the parents did when their children were angry.

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: I just let the anger act itself out. Yah know. I try to ask him why he's angry, but most of the time I don't.

Post: Just leave him get his anger out. That's it. And ask him what is wrong. I don't know. Nothing. I just let him get angry so I can try to find what's wrong.

Pre: I just rock and play with him, rocking and playing with him.

Post: I just cuddle him and tell him it's alright.

B. Change:

Pre: Just let her get angry and sometimes pick her up.

Post: I sit her on my lap until she's done, or I'll sit on the floor and watch her. It depends on what she's angry about, like if she's mad about something she can't have, I'll give her something else. If she wants it fine, if she don't, she'll have to act it out, and then she's fine.

Pre: When she gets angry at me? I sit her down and tell her "No," and talk to her.

Post: I'll ask her what's the matter with her, and sometimes she'll tell me. Most of the time she says, "Leave me alone," and I say, "Okay, Mommy's gonna leave you alone," and tell her when she feels like telling me what the matter is. She won't do it then. She'll just sit there. Then she'll get up on my lap.

Both the "no change" and "change" responses to this question reflected, for the most part, parents who seemed to be comfortable with their children's anger and allowed them to express it with little or no intervention on their part.

Question Seven

Focus: Strategies of parent-child interaction/parent behavior

The following transition statement was made between questions six and seven during both the preprogram and postprogram interviews:

Okay, we've been talking a lot about your child and what you do with your child. Now I'd like to ask you to think some about yourself as a parent. We've found that most parents have some things they feel they do well as a parent, and some things they don't feel they do so well.

Preprogram Question:

7. a. What do you think you do well as a parent?
b. What do you not do so well as a parent?

Postprogram Question:

7. a. What do you think you do well as a parent?
b. In your interview at the beginning of the program you were asked what you didn't do well as a parent. You said: " _____ " How do you feel about that now?

Of the 11 responses to part a of this question, 2 (18%) were coded as exhibiting no change, and 9 (82%) were coded as reflecting change in what the parents thought they did well as parents. Responses to part b reflected 2 (18%) "no change" responses and 9 (82%) showing change in what they thought they did not do so well as a parent. Examples of "no change" and "change" responses to the two parts of the question follow.

Part a:

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: Well, I take care of her very well. I mean I keep her clean, I keep her hair combed, I keep her well fed, and I make sure she gets her proper rest. I mean, everything. And I'm not real mean to her, and I like teaching her things and helping her.

Post: Everything.

Pre: Ah. Teaching my daughter. That's why she's walking early. She's crawling up steps because I'll go through it step by step with her. Right now I read her books, and I try to have her hold them and look at them, and I go places so she can see a lot of different things, so I just try to teach her so she will understand.

Post: Communicate with her. I'm trying to teach her, you know, we just like we read books, and she's out of day care now, so I keep up the same schedule that they had, just try to keep her learning.

B. Change:

Pre: I think that I do well in communicating with her. Letting her get her feelings out.

Post: I think that I don't down talk her, and I basically just make her more like equals than she's the one that I'm supposed to be controlling over. I think that I'm good at like taking care of her and doing stuff with her.

Pre: Um, if I want to do something with my friends or something, I think that most of my time goes to him, and I would put them off before, I mean, if they wanted to go somewhere I'd be like, well, I have . . .

Post: I think that I have shown more love, and I know how to give out more love since I had him, and I think that is a good quality.

Pre: I don't know. I don't want to sound immodest. I think I'm, I think just about everything except every once in a while there's those times when she screams and screams, and I don't want to hear, and I just -- ooo.

Post: Gee, that's a tough one. I don't know how to say it. Um, I give, um, enough attention. I care for them enough, more than most people, more than most older adults that I know. I spend time with them, a lot. I think I'm pretty good at disciplining, too, cause I never spank. I never spank, Missy, but she's been spending a lot of time in a chair. Time out. Two minutes. I figure two minutes is plenty. She has a hard time sitting up there for two minutes so I figure two minutes is okay for her.

The "no change" responses to this question reflected parents who thought they did well with the physical care of their children and also emphasized teaching their children to do new things. The "change" responses reflected some of these same perceptions as well as increased communication with and understanding of their children, giving lots of time and attention to their children, and concern for use of appropriate discipline techniques.

Part b:

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: Nothing.

Post: It's still true.

B. Change:

Pre: Discipline. I don't discipline her enough.

Post: Discipline. I think I'm getting better at it. I think I'm still not as good as I should be at it just because I want to be her friend more than I want to be her mother.

Pre: I don't know. Well, I'm learning, but at first it was like I didn't know what to do with him. I didn't know how, I didn't know what was wrong with him when he cried. I didn't know what his moods were. I didn't know how to handle it because I, I was around a lot of babies when I was little, but not 24 hours seven days a week, so it was just hard. I wasn't very, I didn't know that there had to be so much attention going to one baby. So, I guess I didn't really pay that much attention to him. So, it's a good thing that my mom was around.

Post: Now all attention goes to Danny, so that is not a bad quality anymore. I don't really know what I really do is bad. I don't really think I am doing anything bad right now. No.

Most of the teen parent responses to this question indicated that they thought they did quite well as parents. Those who noted some change in themselves indicated doing better with discipline and giving more attention to their children.

Question Eight

Focus: Family Life and Interaction

Preprogram and Postprogram Questions (same for both):

8. Now let's switch to your family life more generally. At times we all like some things about family life and dislike some things.
- What do you like about your family life?
 - When you have a problem with your family life, maybe something you don't like about your family or something you want to change, what do you do?

Of the 11 responses to part a of this question, 6 (54.5%) were coded as exhibiting no change, and 5 (45.5%) were coded as reflecting change in what the parents liked about their family life. Responses to part b reflected 6 (54.5%) "no change" responses and 5 (45.5%) showing change in what they did when they had a problem with their family life. Examples of "no change" and "change" responses to the two parts of the question follow.

Part a:

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: I like that they're very helpful with me and Zachary, and it's like I said -- without them I don't know what I would -- I don't think I would have Zachary because I really didn't know what to do with him and how to take care of him, but they said that they would help me, so I like that. They're very helpful.

Post: There is two of us now, and we're moved out, but at least I'm not alone. I like the family.

Pre: I like everything. Sometimes if I get angry, my mom starts paying attention to Shelly. And it's a wonderful family cause we all help out, and we all have faults, but we just help each other.

Post: They help me out, provide for my daughter.

B. Change:

Pre: Gee. Couldn't tell you. Truthfully I couldn't.

Post: That I have one. There is a lot of stuff that goes on with my family -- some positive stuff, there's negative stuff. I'm just glad that I got one.

Most of the teen parent responses reflecting both "no change" or "change" in what they liked about their family life were teen parents living with their families and feeling mostly positive about the help and support they received from their family.

Part b:

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: I show my feelings or I fuss and I just run and slam the door and just sit there and open the door and start hollering again.

Post: I go in my bedroom.

Pre: I try to talk to the person that I don't like what's going on with, or I try to change it, me first, to see if that'll change it.

Post: I either ask whoever it is to change it, or I just tell everybody I don't like it.

Pre: Can I give you an example? I don't like it when my youngest sister gets smart with my mother. Cause my mother just lets her get smart. So I'll tell her something -- what I think. Sometimes we'll argue, but mostly she knows she's wrong and she shouldn't of said it.

Post: There's nothing I don't like.

The parents reflecting no change in the how they dealt with family problems indicated mostly either isolating themselves or talking with a family member when a problem occurred.

B. Change:

Pre: Hm. Usually I withdraw, but I'm trying to not do that.

Post: We can talk about anything really, so that's about it.

Pre: Yell at Greg. I, it's mostly what he does that makes me mad.

Post: What do I do when I want something to change? Throw a fit, but it never changes. We've tried to sit down and talk about it, but it lasts about two weeks and then it goes back to the old way.

The parents reflecting change in the how they dealt with family problems indicated somewhat more effort to talk over problems with family members when a problem occurred than they had previously.

Question Nine

Focus: Parent Self-Care

Preprogram Question:

9. As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself?

Postprogram Questions:

9. As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself?

a. Has the way you take care of yourself changed in any way in the last few months?

Of the 11 responses to these two questions, 6 (54.5%) were coded as exhibiting no change, and 5 (45.5%) were coded as reflecting change in the way they took care of themselves.

A. No pre-post change:

Pre: Getting a break every once in a while. Getting a baby sitter.

Post: Get a baby sitter and go for a walk or get a baby sitter and just stay home, relax.

Pre: Well, when I'm by myself, I'll either go out and have fun, go to the movies, or I'll just have a nice bath. I haven't been out much since Erin is so young, but I just watch TV, take a nap, go out sometimes, take a walk to the park.

Post: When she's asleep or when my sister's in the living room, I take her in there and ask her to play with her, or while she's in her walker I do my homework. (Change questions response): No.

B. Change:

Pre: I eat candy. That's about it.

Post: I collect baseball cards, and sometimes I clean my house when I feel like I want to, you know, you can't tell, but sometimes I do, you know. I don't know. Go for a walk with Alison, and that's all.

Pre: I do things. I don't know.

Post: When I need some time alone, she'd go over to Grandma's house, and now, like when I want to go shopping by myself or over to my friends, I'd do stuff like that. I don't just not like myself because I'm a mom, even though she does need a lot. She's little. I still do things for myself when I can.

Using baby sitters or other family members to care for their children so they could do other activities was a common way these parents took care of themselves. They seemed to recognize the importance of taking time for themselves. Some showed movement from less mature to more mature ways of doing so.

QUESTION TEN

Focus: Perceived Changes in Parent, Child, and Family

Postprogram Questions Only:

10. What changes, if any, have you noted in your child or family from participating in this program?
 - a. What are the main things you yourself have gotten from participating in the program?

As indicated with the responses of the non-specific group of parents and the single parents, these final questions were the only questions that were designed to directly seek parents thoughts as to what role the program played in changes in themselves, their children, and/or their families since they began program participation. All of the responses to these questions by the 11 teen parents interviewed indicated change. Their responses reflected 24 different change statements, 18 reflecting change in themselves as parents and 6 reflecting change in their children. The same types of change were noted in these parents as were noted with the non-specific group of parents and the single parent group, although to a much lesser degree. The most frequent type of parent change indicated was that of an increase in feelings of support from others, followed by changes in knowledge and understanding and in parent behaviors. Most of the child changes noted by these parents focused on changes in their children's social relationships and skills. Examples of the changes expressed follow.

Increased feelings of support from others:

- I like it. I have gotten to interact with kids my own age with the same problems, and it seems like a lot of issues we talk about we have talked about before, and just having those people my age there, that was counseling itself.

- Um, I feel more alive, like before I felt like I didn't exist because it's just that I felt like I was the only one out there with certain problems, you know, being a mother, a single mom. I see more, like before I just, you know, I was alone. I felt alone. I didn't feel like doing much. All I was doing was parenting, parenting, parenting, but now that I see other mothers and everything, I want to do more, like you can do more with your kids, you're not, you're not alone. You can go out there more. Just because you have kids doesn't mean you can't do anymore, but you can. That is if your regular parents, but a lot of parents, that's different because they don't know what it's like, but, um.

- I've gotten to let off a lot of steam. And getting to talk things out with somebody.

- I learned that there is always help around and there is all kinds of numbers you can call, and I like that you can always get information from the program when you needed it.

- It is going down there and getting rid of your child for an hour and you talking to other parents, you know.

- Me? Well, yes, because I've learned from other people's experiences. I've made a lot of friends here. I can talk to them, like when I have a problem, I'm better.

- It's a, like a place to get away you know. It's fun. There's caring and sharing.

Changes in parent knowledge and understanding:

- Well, I know a lot more and have come to the center, and I don't know, I think it's kind of cool to go down there and have somewhere to go and talk about stuff. Even I can get more understanding about things.

- More info on certain things, um, certain things that I didn't know that even existed, you know, talking certain things that I didn't know that were ever there that I found out that they were there that would help me better in my situation.

- You've helped me to change, and I've learned a lot.

- I've learned a lot more about how other young parents are dealing with it. Even though, with another exception, I'm the only one here that lives on my own. I can see what it would have been like if I would have stayed at home. And a lot -- like the speakers and stuff -- they've helped me a lot.

- I've learned a lot more about parenting that I didn't know with my first child, and school really helped me. I was really behind, but now I know I do what I have to do. I'm a happier person.

Changes in parent behavior:

- Um, I learned how to be more -- like I said, I didn't know how to pay attention to Sam, but I just wouldn't know what to do with him. I learned how to deal with problems that Sam had from the program, or we both learned how to deal with it instead of just ignore it or pass it over to my family.

- It's gotten a lot easier for me to take care of her. She's not throwing any temper tantrums now.

- I think I can handle Marc better, him going to the center every week.

Child changes in social relationships and skills:

- I think the more she plays with and gets in a group of kids, the better she is at understanding group interaction, and that helps her.

- She plays with kids really good now. And I mean littler kids. She's learning how to share. Like we were just at the doctor's office, and there was a little boy there that she never seen before, and she had two toys in her hand, and she went and gave him one, and she went and sat and played with the other one, and he kept trying to steal hers, but she wouldn't let him.

- In Tim I noticed, um, I'm glad that he is there around other kids as well. Just, I feel that he has learned more different values because of being with other kids. He knows what other kids are like, he knows they are different than he is. They are different from the way he is. It's, he seems to look forward to going all the time, and he has a real good time when he goes.

- She's learning a lot. It's different. Better. She's learned a lot more since we've been here. She's learned, because she's around other kids, she wouldn't of learned at home.

As might be expected, the teen parents as a whole reflected lower levels of knowledge and understanding and less effective behaviors with their children than the non-specific group of parents or the single parents. Their immaturity was clear in many of their answers as they experienced their own youth and development at the same time they were raising their children. In most instances the teen parents were living with their parents and receiving and appreciating considerable help from them. The teen parents were also recognizing the value of support from others that they were receiving through program participation.

Several of the teens did show increased maturity and understanding from the time they entered the program to the end of up to a year of participation. They had a better understanding of their children and themselves as parents. Where understanding increased, positive changes in parent-child interaction were also evident. When parents described using developmentally inappropriate behaviors with their children, even after participation in the program, it was clear that they also lacked the knowledge and understanding of developmental change that is an important prerequisite to developmentally appropriate behavior.

The overall responses of the teen parents clearly indicate the need for ongoing and intense involvement in parent education activities to provide these young parents with the knowledge and understandings they need to support their growth as parents and persons.

Individual Case Studies of Representative Parents

The following descriptions of individual parents interviewed provide a more wholistic picture of families involved in Early Childhood Family Education in contrast to the information obtained across all parents interviewed reported thus far. These individual case studies were written by the Early Childhood Family Education staff who participated in data analysis. They are representative of the diversity of parent participants involved in the study and in Early Childhood Family Education programs across the state.

Rural Southwestern Minnesota Low-Income Two-Parent Family

"I feel like I'm my mother," said Brenda, a young mother in her early twenties, but "sometimes I feel like I didn't want to be my mother yet." Brenda and her two year old daughter, Bethany, began participating in an ECFE program in rural southwestern Minnesota in the winter of 1991. Even though Brenda works part-time, her family still lives on less than \$20,000 per year. Brenda is Caucasian and has lived in the school district less than one year. Thrust into motherhood earlier than she and her husband, Jim, had planned, Brenda came into ECFE with a lot of expectations for herself as a parent. "I don't want to lose my temper with her so much," Brenda said. "I try not to show her that I'm angry," but to get Bethany to do what she needs to do, Brenda said, "I scream sometimes and I try to reason with her, but as I'm doing it, I feel like, 'How can you reason with a two year old?'"

Brenda feels she does do some things well as a parent. Even before becoming involved in ECFE she felt she gave Bethany "the attention she needs." They read stories together, they listen to tapes, learn songs and nursery rhymes, and they "cook together" in the kitchen. But when asked about what she didn't do so well as a parent, Brenda seems unsure of her role as a person and a mother. "I don't know if it's good or bad, but sometimes I just want to do my own things, and there are times when I put myself first. And usually when my husband comes home, I automatically think that it's his turn with her, and I want to escape."

After having participated in about 26 hours of ECFE programming, Brenda already seems more confident in herself. "I think I respect her as a person. I didn't know if I would because I didn't have much experience with little kids, and I thought maybe I wouldn't see her as someone with individual thoughts and feelings, but I think I'm pretty good at that." She seems to also be more sure of what is appropriate behavior for two year olds: "I think when she gets into things, she's just exploring and she doesn't know any better. Jim's family is real into saying 'No' instead of talking about it or distracting her."

Brenda continues to enjoy special time with Bethany as well as their family time, "... just the three of us together. My favorite people in the world. I just like to spend time with them," but the feeling of support and encouragement from ECFE seems to be what most helps her cope with the day-to-day trials of parenting. "It's just so much easier to know you're not the only person who goes through things. You wonder, 'Am I doing this right?' Especially since I haven't had experience with little kids. Just to hear some of the things people say -- it's almost like your own story being told sometimes. Then when a situation comes up again, you can sit back and not be so uptight about it. It's normal and it's okay. I think it's just one of the best things that we've done. I am so thankful for it!"

Urban Middle-Income Two-Parent Family

Before her daughter was born, Jan thought she'd be satisfied to stay at home with her baby and be "the perfect mother." Jan says, "It took me a long time to realize that I just wasn't that type of person." She decided that, for her, work was a release from the stresses of home. It's one way she sees herself taking care of her own needs. Jan is in her twenties and lives with her husband, Dave, in a large urban area. They have a daughter, Susan, who was two and one-half years old when this study began. She is cared for by a home day care provider while her parents are at work. Jan has a college degree and the family's income is between \$35,000-\$50,000 yearly. Jan describes Susan as "aggressive" and "pretty strong willed." She also noticed her becoming more imaginative in her play, sometimes choosing a role and acting it out for a couple of days at a time. As Susan has turned three years old she seems to be more able to play alone or with friends who come over without needing Jan to be involved in the situation. She likes to play near Jan, but doesn't require Jan to be a participant in the play.

Jan and Susan have attended Early Childhood Family Education class for 21 weeks with other families of two year olds. Jan says she has made some changes in the way she interacts with Susan since she started coming to ECFE. Discipline is one area where Jan notes a change in her methods: "There's still some spanking, but I think we've gotten to use more words now and 'time out' is used, not a lot, but where she knows the difference and she's able to understand the 'time outs' where before when you would put her in one she would walk out of the room or walk away. It was almost a fight just to get her to do the 'time out.' Now she understands that when I say there's a 'time out' she needs to stay in that area. She's now grasping the understanding of 'time out.'"

Jan feels she has changed the way she handles her daughter this year because "we do discuss more." This is partly due to the fact that Susan is three years old now and is better able to understand what Jan is talking about. "You know, I think she has a fuller understanding of when I'm angry or what it means to be angry, what it means to hurt, and so it's easier to talk because she understands." This seems to be true in situations where Jan is disciplining Susan or where she is asking Susan to cooperate in doing a task or leaving something alone that she's not suppose to touch. Jan says, "If that doesn't work, we start to use a higher pitched voice, expressing it a little more firmly." Things seem calmer at home since Jan can talk to Susan and Susan can understand what her mother wants. Being patient with Susan is one thing Jan feels she doesn't do so well. In her first interview Jan laments, "I snap and it causes tension around the house. The yelling at each other and the occasional spanking that we do, it seems like the hand rules sometimes more than our patience does." After attending ECFE classes, Jan commented, "I still lose patience, but I think that we talk a little bit more, and it isn't such a shouting match, and we try to work it out."

As a family, Jan, Dave, and Susan make a point of sitting down together at the supper table. They also work together on housework and make sure they involve Susan in their projects around the house. When family problems arise, Jan said in the first interview, "We don't work it out until there's a boiling point, and once it gets to that boiling point, then we sort of explode and sort of start over again and talk about it, but I don't think it's an ongoing talk. It always gets to the point where things erupt, and then we have to kind of start over again, and then it's okay until there's another problem. So we kind of hit and miss I guess you could say."

In the second interview she said that they try to talk about problems first now, "but sometimes it gets to a boiling point where it becomes a yelling match. We still try to talk

first, but sometimes it doesn't always work like we strive for." As Jan reflected on the impact that ECFE has had on her family, she stressed that they now talk more and express feelings when they feel hurt or are really angry at something. As she said, "Sometimes it's still in the spanking mood, but at least we're expressing why we're spanking that child or why we are yelling, but we're using our words more." And she has learned not to compare Susan to other children: "For example, I used to always compare her to my friends' kids. I hate that, but I don't want to say like 'Patrick is doing this now, but Susan, why can't you?' I try to stay away from that because now I know that isn't right. But that's what we grew up with so I am watching that."

Jan seems to have gained both knowledge and skills in the areas of communication and expressing feelings during her year at ECFE. Her daughter has matured from a not so verbal two and one-half year old to a three year old who can better understand what her mother says. ECFE has helped Jan take a good look at the way she parents and has given her the means to make some changes in her life.

Central Minnesota Small Town Low-Income Two-Parent Family

Mary lives in rural Minnesota with her two year old son, Josh, and her husband, who is a student and works part time as an ambulance driver. Her hometown is a community of about 1,500 people located in central Minnesota. Mary is a white mom in her early twenties and has lived in this community for more than ten years. Her family lives on a yearly income under \$9,000. They participate in the WIC nutrition program and receive food stamps and AFDC. Mary has participated in two parent-child classes for parents and two year olds as well as two open houses and a field trip to Como Zoo for a total of 43 hours of involvement in the ECFE program.

Before Mary began her ECFE experience, she seemed confused about some discipline issues and unsure of her parenting methods. When asked what she thought she didn't do well as a parent Mary responded, "There is a lot of things. Sometimes I think I am too strict. I don't know. Like he wants to sleep with us at night, and I always give in and let him do it, and I know he should be in his own bed for all of our benefit, and I am trying to potty train him, and I am not doing too well at that. I kind of run out of patience with him a lot." And when asked how she got Josh to do what she wanted him to do she said, "He does some things that make me mad, I spank him, put him in a chair or just send him off to his room so we're not fighting with each other or something."

After her year of participation in the ECFE program, she was asked if her approaches to getting Josh to do things have changed. Mary said, "Yes, it seems like I used to, if he didn't do something I wanted him to do, I just spanked him and sent him off, but now I think about it more since we have been in class and stuff. You know, you go to class every week, so you get more reminded to use other ways and stuff, and I just think about it more."

Mary is becoming more aware of her parenting responses instead of just reacting in a situation. She is also getting more ideas of possible ways to respond to her child instead of just spanking him. When Mary reflected on how she has changed as a result of this program she said, "You go and hear other mothers going through the same things, and you get more relaxed, and you're not the only one that maybe isn't doing exactly the right thing, and you don't know what to do, and you're worried about it. I feel more relaxed, you know, sometimes I might do something wrong and sometimes I might do something right, but that's just the way it is with everybody. Just more relaxed in my attitude toward discipline. I think I have gotten more easy going, like with strictness, but things I know

are important for him like going to bed I don't give in so much. It's like he's older and he understands more and I can explain to him why, so it's easier to not give in. When he was younger he didn't understand why I was getting him to do stuff. Potty training -- well, we gave up and now we're starting again, and it is going better now. He is more ready and I don't make a big deal about it. It's kind of his thing. If he wants to do good then that's fine. And he's going to be good." Mary's statements indicate a growing confidence in her parenting, a more relaxed attitude toward discipline, and more relaxed expectations for her child.

ECFE has also had an impact on Mary's feelings of respect toward her child. After participating in the program she said, "I spend a lot of time with him, so I'm aware of what's going on, I give him a lot of positive attention and when I see myself doing something that is not so positive, I try and change it. I treat him like a human being. Sometimes I notice, like with my husband, that he will just snap at him and expect him to do something without thinking, and I think, 'Now would I expect myself to do that?' And I try and think more that way. Treat him like I would want to be treated."

Her understanding of Josh as a unique person and an awareness of appropriate developmental behavior were clarified for her after participating in the parents and twos class. She said, "Before I thought you have a good kid if he is well behaved, and you wanted to make sure he is well behaved by making sure he didn't do this or didn't do that, and now it's like you see other kids, and maybe they aren't less well behaved, but they are just more energetic, and so what. I don't care if Josh is more energetic. I don't want him to be something that he is not. I don't want to force him if he doesn't want to do something that's not important, like potty training. Everyone says he is getting kind of old. You should potty train him. He will when he's ready and it's his time."

Mary's own personal growth and the way she cares for herself has also changed since participating in the ECCE program. At the beginning of the year she said, "I don't have a lot of time to myself." But when asked how she takes care of herself at the end of the year, she said, "I used to not be so good at that. When Josh was first born, I sort of gained a lot of weight. I really didn't care so much about how I looked because I didn't really go so many places. It was winter time, and I don't know. I started thinking about it, and I remember with my mom, she always stayed at home and she was sort of old-fashioned. I wasn't really embarrassed about her, but I just wished that she would do more things with me and would be more up to date, and so I started thinking, 'Well, do I want to be like that?' You don't want to gain so much that you don't have anything that fits, so I lost weight and that feels good, and I got some new clothes and started to do more things, like teach Sunday School. I really like that. And I just get out more and more. Kind of more independent than depending on Bob to take me shopping. I used to be afraid to drive, and I got over that, so I go shopping more and just get out. I don't want to be stuck home and have to depend on someone else to do something."

When asked to think about what she has gotten from participating in the program, she responded, "I have been working on being more independent and depending on myself for things. I want to take Josh places, and I used not to do that because I was afraid to drive so I would have my sister or someone drive me, and she would have to bring her kids, and it wasn't as much fun as just Josh and me doing things."

ECCE has also had a positive effect on Josh. After Mary thought about how her son had changed during the year she said, "I don't know if it's just that I'm more relaxed in discipline, but since we have been coming to class, Josh has been more relaxed with me being with other people. I teach Sunday School. But now that we have been coming here

he goes to his class just fine, and he is just more relaxed." The year at ECFE seems to have helped Josh with some separation issues.

Participating in ECFE has given Mary more confidence in her parenting, new attitudes of respect for the uniqueness of her child, a better understanding of appropriate behavior, increased feelings of independence, and improved self-care skills. Her child has become more comfortable being away from his mom as a result of his involvement in the program. Mary sums it up best by saying, "Josh and I love going to class. We have fun and learn stuff, too."

Central Minnesota Small Town Middle-Income Two-Parent Family

When Laura, mother of two, first started the Early Childhood Family Education program, she had undergone a number of major changes in her life. Not only had she moved to a new home in a town of 5,000 in the west central part of Minnesota, she had also quit her job, given birth to her second child and had started to adjust to the long hours of her husband's new position. Her family now was supported by one income instead of two.

Laura relates the difficulty of these adjustments, "There's more tension now. We had more income, and now when we moved we had to adjust to less. The stress of all these changes and adjustments is reflected in her response to the question, "What do you think you do well as a parent?" Lately nothing! Yesterday was a bad day. My husband didn't get home until 7:30. It's a big blank." Later she said, "I generally don't like children and wonder why I do this, but five minutes later I feel different." She also had concerns about how her one year old child, David, was handling the birth of his new brother: "I'm fearful for the youngest. The oldest sits so close. It's hard trying to react to both." She mentioned frustrations over his temper tantrums and his demands on her while she was trying to nurse the baby. She described David as "a bundle of energy, noisy, active and curious," and talked about what they enjoyed doing together: "We enjoy reading and looking at books. He likes to throw the ball. I like it when he's quiet, plays by himself and doesn't bother Mom."

Laura participated in ECFE regularly during the year following her move. She attended fall, winter, and spring sessions with David. By the end of the year David was two years old and her baby was almost one year old. Laura's attitude toward her children and herself seemed to have undergone changes which are evident in her second interview. Laura talked about David as "becoming quite independent. He has a strong personality. Mostly he's a pretty happy child. He does throw his temper tantrums when he doesn't get his way, says 'no' a lot, but mostly he's a good kid."

The way Laura related to David changed during the year as well. In her initial interview in answer to the question, "What do you do when you don't feel so loving toward your child?" Laura answered, "I sometimes put him in his room or I yell. I walk away and take a deep breath. He follows, but knows I'm not happy." By the end of the year in response to the same question, Laura said ". . . if I'm getting to a boiling point, I try to think for a second before saying anything. This class has given me a lot of insight as to why he's misbehaving, why he's doing the things he's doing. He's not just trying to be a brat. He's having difficulties. I give him more credit -- not so much credit, but give him a break, give him a chance." Laura has learned new strategies for getting David to do what she wants him to do: "Try to give him a choice. The two choices might both be what I want, but it gives him the chance to make that choice." She also learned more about herself in controlling her temper: "When I'm well rested, I'm pretty understanding of him. When I'm tired, I lose my patience very easily." The earlier frustrations with the time demands

and income limitations of her husband's new job seem to have become easier to deal with, even if not resolved. "I like that Dad gives time to the children when he gets time. What I don't like -- Dad is gone an awful lot, more than what makes me happy -- but it goes in correlation, if he's going to bring home the money, he's going to have to be gone."

In summing up what Early Childhood Family Education has done to help Laura in her role as a parent, Laura shares her ideas about how she's changed: "I'd say the biggest thing is in me -- that I pay more attention to David and his attitudes or his behavior. And I try to sit back, and you know, before if he would have been into things, or whatever, I just would have said, 'He's just trying to get to me.' Well, now I think 'he's investigating, he's trying to learn, he doesn't realize that when he pulls a thing apart, it's going to fall apart or whatever.' I guess mostly my view of his behavior, I'd say just mostly me and how I react to him." Laura took pride in sharing a comment her grandmother had made about the influence of ECFE on her parenting skills. Her grandmother told her mother how impressed she was when Laura reacted with humor and diversion instead of scolding her young son due to this ECFE class!

Southeastern Minnesota Single Parent Without Child Custody

Sandy is a single parent in her twenties. She lives alone and works over 25 hours each week as a nurse's aide. She likes her job, is good at it, and the people she works for like her. Two years ago Sandy lost custody of her three children, ages two, four, and seven, because of parental neglect and her chemical dependency. During these past two years Sandy has been involved in chemical dependency treatment and a halfway house for treatment. She has been working hard to learn about herself, her chemical dependency, and how to be a better parent.

At the present time, Sandy describes herself as having grown in her parenting abilities. She says, "I know how to love better. I know about boundaries. I don't shame my kids like I used to before. I am a better parent, but I am sadder because I know how far I have to go and how I hurt my kids, and how bad the damage is. I feel lousy about myself for this." Sandy also knows it is dangerous to blame herself for everything that happened in her past because the pain could cause her to start drinking again. So she concentrates on just working one day at a time to change. Sandy has a very real sense of how fragile her sobriety is. Feeling her feelings, relating to her children in more healthful ways, and having relationships that break out of those old patterns all have their price to pay. Even though these new patterns are healthier patterns, they are not yet as comfortable as her old ones. Sandy tells us, "I have a nicer boyfriend now who is not abusive to me. That's good. I worry, though, 'Will it last?'"

Being in contact with her children's foster brothers and sisters has been reassuring to Sandy. She says of her four year old, "He likes his foster brothers and sisters. They are very much into bathroom talk and that made me feel better because my boy does that." Sandy shows an increased understanding of her four year old's behavior and how he copes with his life circumstances when she says that "he moves a lot to avoid feelings. I never understood this before." Also she states that "he seems to be sad a lot."

Sandy sees her children periodically at social services. The physical environment seems to be less than ideal because when Sandy and her children meet "it's always in a small room at social services." She likes meeting with her children, but often doesn't know what to do there. All of her children often want her attention at the same time, and sometimes it gets pretty wild in that small space. But Sandy has learned to head off misbehavior born of nothing to do and very confined quarters by bringing in her own play dough and toys she

has checked out of the library. Now at the visits they all like to sit together, build with blocks, sit on each other's laps, and play with the toys and books she has brought. Still she wishes they had more space.

Sandy feels she is better at expressing her feelings, now. She said that two years ago she didn't even know she had feelings or that if she began to feel she would either retreat or drink. Through her ECFE sessions Sandy says she has learned a lot about how to show her children love. She tries to listen to feelings and tries to figure out what she feels and to express it to her children. "Like when I leave the visits," Sandy says, "I tell them, 'I'm really sad now. I miss you. I hate to leave you.' I always pretended it didn't matter before."

When Sandy was growing up, her parents spent very little time with her and let her do pretty much what she wanted. So she entered parenthood not knowing effective ways to discipline. Sandy says, "I think I am better at discipline now. I see discipline as love and not abuse. I see that the lack of discipline that I did before was part of my being neglectful with the children. I still want them to have fun, but now I know how unsafe they feel without limits. I remember that from my childhood. Before ECFE Sandy didn't know that you could discipline with love. She likes the "60 second scolding" learned in ECFE and says, "It works good with my boy and tells him I love him and I don't want him to be bad. I say, 'I get really angry when you hit,' and I really yell, and then I get quiet and say, 'I love you and want you to be a good, kind boy. I don't want you to be a boy who hits.' Then I hug him. It feels good."

Sandy has changed how she gets her children to do what she wants them to. Two years ago she would try to talk them into a particular behavior or make a game of it to get them to do what she wanted them to. Now Sandy has a wide variety of age appropriate behavior management techniques that she uses. She is also able to anticipate situations which might promote behavior problems and heads them off by bringing activities and toys into the situation to share with her children.

Sandy still has her ups and downs, struggles and joys. Despite all the learning and insights she has gained, sometimes Sandy still doesn't feel confident that she does that much very well in parenting her children. She feels guilty that her children have had to be away from her for two years because of her drinking. To put it in Sandy's words, "That stinks." Sandy knows what the cycle of neglect and abuse does to families. She lives with her shame but says, "I want to change to make that different. I do love them so much, and I want to break the cycle of neglect and abuse. I don't want them to end up like me. I am scared they might unless I keep working hard. I hope it's not too late. I'm not as bad as my parents, but I'm not good."

Sandy is learning to take care of herself. Instead of drinking and going to bars which she said "really worked cruddy," Sandy now goes to meetings, talks to people, goes for walks, and tries not to isolate. She also tries to feel about things. Sandy is going to start counseling on her sexual abuse which she thinks is a big factor in her drinking. She didn't used to know how her abuse affected her. She just figured everyone had some of that.

Father in an Upper Middle-Income Two-Parent Family in a Large Urban Area

John attended ECFE in a large urban area with his two year old daughter, Anne. He is in his twenties, has a Bachelor's degree, and is in an upper income bracket. His wife is also employed. Anne is their only child.

When John started the program in the fall he felt inadequate disciplining Anne. He said, "Her grandmother who sometimes takes care of her and also her day care person, they have a knack of getting her mind off of what she's doing and trying to get her to do what they want her to do. I think to a degree I have a lack of patience in that area. I'm amazed at how her grandmother handles that -- it seems so easy for her." John felt strongly that Anne is "supposed to obey us and cooperate." He came to ECFE looking for help. He described Anne: "She tends to be very demanding, especially with my wife and myself, especially when we're alone. She doesn't seem to have that problem with either of the grandmas. She listens to them a bit better. I don't know if that's the way we approach things. She likes to have her own way." The techniques that he was trying -- raising his voice, spanking, and "time outs" were not working. She just kept testing them. He felt his downfall was patience. He stated, "I don't have the patience to be positive. I get loud with her." She was getting more and more demanding and always wanted her way. John said, "With her being our first, I'm not sure how a two year old acts." He relied on her day care provider for information about how she was developing. "I've been told by her day care that they're amazed how well she can talk and converse with adults and children." He described Anne as being outgoing.

After attending ECFE for a year he had a much better understanding of child development. He now saw her "defiance" as a stage in becoming more independent. When he was asked what children her age are like he said, "Well in the classroom setting I think she's no different than anyone else. I guess in that regard that is a good situation and knowing that other kids are just like that. Being that Anne is our first child we don't know how exactly she's supposed to be at this age, but I think having her in a class like that helps in terms of seeing where she's at. Also knowing that from an educational point of view she's testing us in some of the things we expect of her." He saw Anne now in a much more positive light. The frustration he felt when disciplining Anne was now gone. He said, "Although I feel personally that there is still a need to be disciplined, and yet there's a different way of disciplining. Being stern and being firm without yelling. But with class we have learned to be better. I guess from the parent's standpoint to be better to hold in our aggression and vent it out in a little bit more calm and conservative way instead of taking it out on Anne."

When John was asked how he gets Anne to do what he wants her to do he said, "That aspect of it has been more words, and we try to have a more controlled tone, and we've found that when we raise our voices she tends to raise her voice not only in that individual situation but in a way when she is with other kids. She gets upset and she raises her voice, too, and I guess she's following what we're doing. I guess she's learning what we are teaching her." He now sees how the techniques they had been using in the past were influencing Anne. The class provided him with other options. "Obviously, first we ask, and then if we are not overly successful with that we try a little more creative way of explaining to her why we want her to do what we want her to do. Sometimes make it a game, make it more fun and enjoyable." He described his discipline as now being "basically a lot more calm and gentler in approach, still getting a point across but being more direct, but without a raised voice."

Now when Anne becomes angry they do not just end up yelling at each other, but they help her instead try to understand that feeling. "We let her know that it is okay to be angry. When she is angry to a point where she pushes or shoves something like that that's physical, we tell her to use her words. She listens to that and tries to do that. We tell her that it's okay to be angry, but we try to explain to her why we want her to do something. We try to explain it the best way we feel. Something that is good for her to do."

John now enjoys his family life "more so than before, more time to be at home. I think Anne missed that, and I think a lot of my time previously was surrounded with my job and my job only. Not the quality time that I needed. I think recently the time we spend, taking the time to sit down and have a meal together, is important. As a family I think it's important to do things together, eat dinner and play together and organizing our time so that we individually have some free time, but there's only so many hours in a day. One of the things that I like best about having a family life is time together and doing things together."

In summary John described his experience at ECFE as, "I got a better appreciation of some of the finer details of parenting. Some of the finer things that I would have otherwise not have noticed in the sense of how Anne or how children do things at certain ages. Some little things in terms of how they respond, how they grow up, that I otherwise would probably take for granted and not notice. I think that one nice thing this class provides is sitting back, you look at your child growing up. I think I consider it a study type analysis as a child growing up more than classroom type, book type setting of how to grow up. Look at more why they do what they do when they do it. I liked that experience. It's interesting. It's something I didn't notice otherwise. You might notice it, but you don't think about it. The awareness of that has been nice."

Anne no longer has John and his wife totally baffled. As a couple they are working together to help each other be more patient. "We keep reminding each other what we have learned in school, especially how to approach Anne when we're frustrated. The most frustrating thing and the most common thing, a common problem that both my wife and I have, the most important aspect that we have is being a little bit more lenient with Anne." The expectations they have for her are now more realistic. This new way of relating to Anne is also mirrored in the way she relates to others. "I think she's learned how to better approach other children and to express herself."

Urban Low-Income Hispanic Two-Parent Family Living with Extended Family Members

Juanita has recently moved to Minneapolis and lives with her in-laws, husband and one year old son. The family is of Hispanic origin, and both English and Spanish are spoken in the home. She is in her twenties and says she is a full-time homemaker. She participates in the WIC nutrition program and lists her household income as being under \$5,000.

This is Juanita's first experience in ECFE. She attended throughout the school year for a total of 58 hours in classes for infants and one year olds. She became a member of the ECFE advisory board mid-year. Her husband also attended a dad's class.

Separation from her son was the impetus for her joining the program. She says, "From early on he's become a mama's boy. He's not real good with anyone else. With strangers he really cries. The only thing that calms him down is me. The days come when I really need a break. There's no one to leave him with. And it's not healthy I don't think for him to always be with me and me to always be with him."

The class Juanita joined first was a non-separating class where parents stayed with their infants. She joined a class during the second half of the year where parents separated from their one year olds for the parent discussion. Her reflections at the end of the year show her growth in this area. "It's gotten a lot easier. I don't know if it's within me, but I never felt that he'll be okay. And I think it's because of this program that it's helped me with that. I know my child and I know what he wants. Well, other people can learn that, and I

didn't realize that until recently. It's not that we leave him a lot, but it's given us the sense we can."

Over the year, Juan has become the focal point of their family. While his attention span was short, they felt challenged to look for things to keep him occupied. "This changed. It used to be, 'What can my husband and I do for the day?' Now it's like, 'What can we do that Juan will like? What can we do that will tire him out?' It's really funny how that changed. Or it's like we want to go out tonight, but 'Who's going to watch him where he'll have fun?' It's not putting him off. I'm looking for who he's gonna have fun with. It's fun. Everyday he comes up with new things. It's exciting."

Juanita sees Juan as being a very active child. Her early description is of "a very wild" child. "Ever since he was born he is not calm. He's constantly moving. His legs are constantly kicking. His hands are going from very early. When he was younger, he used to nurse every two hours, even all through the night. And I would sit and cry and feel like this was never going to end." She was constantly looking for things to do with Juan. "Because he's so active and so wild, reading stories isn't good for him. I try and he wants to rip the book apart." With Juan's growth and development over the year, Juanita's focus has changed. She describes him as "wonderful." She continues to describe him as "active" but she sees it as "exciting." She now says reading books is something they enjoy together. "We enjoy reading books. That is a real special time for us. That's the only time he will sit. I can read him a book 30 times over, and he sits there. So that's real special with us."

Another special time is "at night time. We read books, he drinks his bottle, and he holds my hair. It's really soothing and comforting. And you know, I'm real selfish that way. I like to be the one to put him to sleep. My husband really enjoys that, too, but I really want it because it's like I've spent all day with him, through the ups and downs, through his whining and everything else. At night he's just so loving, and I want that time with him because I know that I'm putting him to sleep for the night. And I finally get to relax." Juanita was asked to reflect on how the way they spend time together has changed in the past few months. "What we do now is more outside. More creative play. Before I just let him play. Now I'm learning how to do things with him, and that he understands me. I think that's what has made things different. We can kind of communicate. Even though he can't talk back, he's really understanding."

Urban Black Teen Parent Family

Kelly is a young mother in her late teens. When asked what she thought she did well as a parent, she said, "I take care of LaMont. I like the way I dress him and the way I take care of him and stuff, and the way I stay up with him at night. I try to do all I can."

Kelly is a high school junior with two children -- Tommie, two years old and LaMont, seven months old. She attended ECFE parenting classes two days a week for eight months. Her first child, Tommie, was taken away from her when he was four months old because she was not able to take care of him. She said, "I couldn't take care of Tommie. I had too many problems." Tommie is currently being parented by Kelly's mom. Kelly sees Tommie when she is at her mom's, but does not oversee the full care of him. She is currently living in a home with LaMont's dad and his dad's mother. She feels bad she can't take care of Tommie, but she knows he is better off with his grandma. She is working hard to take care of LaMont and wants to finish school. Kelly says, "I've learned a lot more about parenting that I didn't know with my first child. The first time it was hard even to dress him and take care of him." Now she thinks she is good at that, but she has

even learned more. She says, "I meet his needs well. I buy his material things. I talk to him. He talks back. He needs attention -- how to play games, how to do things by himself. I just teach him. It's emotional." Kelly has learned to recognize both the physical and emotional needs of LaMont.

Kelly seemed to like LaMont when I first met her. She said, "Ain't much to tell, but he's an okay baby." Seven months later she smiles with delight as she describes him. "He's silly! And he is a joyful baby, and he loves to get into everything, and I love him cause he's so loveable and funny (laugh). He's eight months and he likes to stand up and crawl and walk around tables, get into ash trays, tissues, everything. He likes clapping his hands. He sees everything. He likes colors. He likes to pick up things. He likes playing with his fingers, different things." She has learned that LaMont can learn from her. She says to the question, "How do you get your child to do what you want him to do?" "I just teach him. I show him how to do things. Yes, when I teach him things, he learns and learns."

Kelly grew up in a family of four in a large city. Her family has always been dependent on AFDC and food stamps. She and her child continue to be dependent on both. At the time of our first interview she told me about her family life. She said, "It's all right. The only family I got is LaMont and my mom, and we all get along well. We talk to each other and tell each other how we feel and stuff." At the time of the second interview LaMont's dad had become a part of her family life and her feelings about her own family had changed. She said, "We don't see much of each other, and that makes me angry. They talk about each other."

Kelly enjoys playing with LaMont. She says, "What he likes, I like. Like playing with the rattle." She says, "I hug him and tell him I love him. I hug him real tight." When she doesn't feel loving toward him she still hugs him but she says, "I used to cry, but now I just talk to him and tell him." She has learned that kids learn about feelings from their parents teaching them.

Kelly has changed and she knows it. She says, "School really helped me. I was really behind, but now I do what I have to do. I'm a happier person."

Suburban Upper Middle-Income Two-Parent Family

Teresa is a married women in her thirties living in a suburban middle to upper income community. She holds a Bachelor's degree and has been a full-time career person and mother for the past three and one-half years. Teresa's family has experienced great change in the past year with the birth of a new baby, their second child. Teresa decided to give up her career and become a stay-at-home mother, now working only a few hours each week outside the home.

As a new stay-at-home mother, Teresa found the Early Childhood Family Education program. She joined a class in the fall and continued faithfully through the end of the spring semester with virtually no absences. Her class met each week for 28 weeks. Each two hour class session involved parent-child interaction time, early childhood education for her three and one-half year old son, Peter, and a parent education discussion group.

Teresa came into ECFE as a capable, responsible parent who expressed her strengths by saying, "I enjoy getting the meals, feeding them, and dressing them." In discussing her family situation Teresa was quick to point out the benefits to her family now that she is usually at home rather than at work. "It makes it easier for my husband to put in the long

hours that he needs for his job. It makes it easier for the kids now that they don't have to get up at a certain point in the morning." However, Teresa expressed something many stay-at-home mothers experience which is the difficulty in finding time to take care of herself. Her immediate response when asked, "How do you take care of yourself?" was "Good question!"

An outstanding emotion Teresa brought with her to her ECFE classes was guilt. She worried about the impact three and one-half years of day care might have had on Peter. She felt guilty whenever Peter got angry, assuming that she was responsible for his anger, and she felt guilty about wanting and needing time for a break for herself.

After participating in ECFE classes for one school year, Teresa's expectations for herself as a parent changed dramatically. Regarding Peter's years at day care, she said, "I was constantly riding this guilt trip that he had been warped or ruined by day care. So it was wonderful to go to ECFE and meet other parents and discover that other 3 and 4 year olds have similar problems or other trials and tribulation like mine. They don't always go to bed perfectly, and they don't always behave perfectly all of the time. They don't have all the answers either, so I don't need to think that day care has ruined him."

Her class also helped Teresa better understand Peter's anger. She said, "One thing I think I learned in ECFE is with his anger. I learned that I don't have to feel responsible about it all of the time and feel bad about it. So when he is angry I pretty much allow him to be angry, and I don't knock myself out feeling like I am the one responsible or being a terrible parent or whatever. I realize that is part of his life."

And, finally, regarding Teresa's feelings of guilt when she wants time for herself, she says, "Now I am freer to say if I need a block of time. I feel not so guilty just saying that to my husband or to somebody that I just need a break, so can they take over for awhile. I have learned to ask when I need a break, and I am usually a better parent later because of it."

Teresa has become more confident and comfortable with herself as a parent. She says, "I kind of learned that parenting is just a continuous process. You have to learn and you have to accept that you are never going to know it all. You have to accept that with every few months, that with every new stage or age, there is a new challenge and learn some new way to deal with it. I realize that parenting is a growing process and you are never going to have it totally down." ECFE provided Teresa with the information and support she needed during a time of transition in her life.

Northwestern Minnesota Small Town Low-Income Teen Single Parent Family

Sharon attends ECFE in a small northwest Minnesota town of 8,500 with her children, three year old, Melanie, and her infant, Susan. Sharon is unemployed but currently seeking employment. She does not have her high school diploma or GED. She receives AFDC, food stamps, and participates in the WIC nutrition program. She has lived in the small community for over ten years. This past year Sharon, Melanie, and Susan attended a morning infant and toddler program that included a parent discussion group. In spring quarter they attended a Tuesday evening session called Terrific Tuesdays. This was primarily a parent-child activity time.

When interviewed at the start of her ECFE program, Sharon described her child as a "little rat." She went on to say that Melanie likes to play with other kids "tearing around, beating

on Susan." When asked what three year olds are like, Sharon said, "They don't listen. Instead of the 'terrible twos' its the 'terrible threes,' I think." Throughout this initial interview Sharon reflected a negative attitude toward her daughter. It appeared that she also projected her own inadequacy on to her daughter. For example, when asked, "What do you do when you don't feel so loving?" she really answered with an example of when her daughter is not loving: "She goes in her room and pouts. I go in and ask her what's wrong. She says, 'Nobody loves me!' So I go in and hug her and tell her I love her."

In general, during the the first interview Sharon had difficulty talking about herself and owning her own behavior as a parent. When asked what she did not do so well as a parent she responded, "I don't know." When asked what she does regarding a family problem she stated, "We just change it, tell everybody in the family to try to change, sometimes it doesn't change but . . ." When asked what she and her child enjoy doing together, Sharon answered, "Well, I don't know. She likes to sleep and eat with me." One might assume that Sharon had difficulty seeing her child as a person with needs different and separate from her own.

In contrast, Sharon's interview at the end of her ECFE participation had an entirely different tone. She described her daughter, Melanie, in a positive manner, without negative comments: "She's a good kid. She likes to play dress up and help redo stuff around the house. She likes to play with other kids." The negative behaviors reported in the first interview regarding socialization did not appear in the second one. Sharon's increased positiveness toward her daughter surfaced in many questions. In the second interview Sharon said she gets her child to do something by "making it fun, like a game or something, or I do it with her." Sharon seemed to be using methods of engaging her child instead of entering into power struggles. Her answers also reflected increased understanding of normal child development. Instead of seeing her child as "terrible three," she was more accepting of her growing independence and need for play. She described three year olds now as, "They're really into pretending, like she is the mom or something. She can do lots for herself. I don't have to help her much." Sharon also stated, "I try and help her instead of fighting with her to do things. We like to snuggle together and just be together. She is a lot of fun."

Sharon's second interview showed she was able to own her behavior and responsibilities as a parent. During the second interview Sharon spoke about herself and not her child when asked, "What do you do when you don't feel so loving?" "I try to tell her when I'm in a bad mood and it's not her fault. I try to talk it over with her so she knows why I'm mad." Clearly Sharon is understanding more about herself and how important it is that her daughter not assume responsibility for Mom's issues.

Sharon also showed increased confidence as a parent from the first to second interview. When asked initially what she thought she did well as a parent, she answered, "I keep my kids pretty clean all the time, my house is always clean, and they're always fed." Although these are important tasks of a parent and not to be minimized, Sharon's answers in the second interview reflected a broader perspective of parenting and the quality of her interaction and communication with her child. She stated, "I try to understand her and be patient with her. She's just a kid."

In both interviews, Sharon came across as a young single parent that loves her children very much. Her profile was interesting because of the risk factors in her life -- teen parent, single, low-income, high school drop out -- that could easily impair her ability to meet her children's needs. The difference in her attitude and behavior toward her child between the first and second interview was great, demonstrating the powerful impact of ECFE on improving the parent-child relationship. It is this type of family support that prevents child

abuse and neglect. The long range outcomes of enhancing parents' perceptions of their children, their understanding of their children's development, and their ability to see their children as persons separate from themselves cannot be underestimated.

The second interview ended with Sharon describing what changes, if any, she noted in her child or family from participating in this program. Sharon concluded, "Melanie really likes coming to her school. It's a good chance for her to play with other kids. It's nice to know you're not the only parent who is going through the things you go through with your kids. I've learned ways to help Melanie."

Southern Minnesota Small City Middle-Income Two-Parent Family

Jane is a 45 year old woman who lives with her husband and four year old daughter in a small city in southern Minnesota. The family's annual income is approximately \$40,000. Jane has a high school diploma and has taken some vocational education courses. She quit her full-time job during the summer of 1990 in order to devote herself to her home and family. Jane became involved in Early Childhood Family Education in the fall of 1990. During the following school year she and her daughter, Anne, participated in a weekly ECFE class entitled "Parenting in the Dark." This class designed for adult children of alcoholics and their preschool children included parent discussion and education, early childhood education, and parent-child interaction. She also participated in six one hour home visits during the year and an evening special event. Her total ECFE involvement during the year was approximately 88 hours.

Jane described herself as the adult child of a chemically dependent parent. Her own childhood failed to prepare her for many aspects of parenting. Consistency in discipline, fostering self-esteem in children, handling anger, and healthy family communication were all "things I was never shown." In her first interview, Jane stated that one of her strengths as a parent was that "everyday I tell her that I love her and that we really wanted her. I was never told that."

Since Jane had never felt loved or wanted as a child, she valued her husband's involvement with their daughter. She described Tom as "active in the family. He does things with Anne. He pays attention to her." Jane acknowledged, however, that the family did have problems stemming from Tom's alcoholism and her own history as the child of an alcoholic. She expressed the fear that Anne would follow the same patterns of co-dependency that she herself had. She said in her first interview, "I worry about co-dependency problems, what she will pick up from me, and I want to help myself as much as I can and help her to be a better person."

Through counseling, Jane had learned that she could not be responsible for her husband or force him to change. She knew that she needed to take care of herself and to learn strategies for healthy and successful parenting. She also recognized that her daughter was beginning to show signs of co-dependency and that it was vital that she help break that pattern. For these reasons, she enrolled herself and Anne in the ECFE "Parenting in the Dark" class.

Jane believes that her year of ECFE involvement was of tremendous benefit to herself and her child. In her second interview she said, "There are huge changes. Anne is more assertive, and I feel she will do much better in kindergarten as a result. She was kind of a quiet girl who faded into the background before in a group. Now she has blossomed. She really likes school, and she is talking out in group and with the other children. She is very much more self-confident. She seems to be able to lead her own life now because she

seems to be aware I can lead my life and I don't need her so much now. Anne used to get caught up into feelings during fights. Now she doesn't."

Jane felt that her own ability to express and accept feelings changed greatly during her months in ECFE. She said, "I can tell Anne how I feel. If I'm mad at Dad I can say, 'I am mad at Dad. I am angry with him.' So I don't feel so out of control. I am more in control of it, and I can tell her and be honest about it. I think that causes a whole lot less anxiety for her and myself rather than covering up. Now I just am angry, but yet not be nasty about it. She can tell me what she's upset about and that's okay. If she's mad about something she can tell Mom and not get beat over the head about it. Before I would have said, 'No, no, it's not that bad,' and all that sort of stuff I'd heard. Shove it down, etc. She gets over it much easier, so that's been a valuable tool, just to learn to be honest."

"Parenting in the Dark" provided Jane with a repertoire of parenting strategies to which she had never been exposed. In her first interview she described herself as "kind of wishy washy. Sometimes I let her get away with things. So I don't feel I'm real consistent there cause I never had those set rules when I was a child." When she was asked in her second interview to reflect on how her discipline style had changed, she said, "I've learned to give Anne choices. Not to say, 'You will do this,' but instead, 'You can do this or that, or this will be the consequence.'" Because of ECFE she said, "I guess I appreciate Anne more and realize she really is a human being and is learning from me. I try to be more of an example. I'm more careful how I discipline her and what I say. I guess especially that I can be honest with her now. I can say 'I goofed up. I'm sorry.' I never heard that as a child. I can tell her I'm not perfect or say, 'I'm crabby right now.' I think it's really helped her. Last fall I saw some real co-dependent traits in her. I'm seeing less of that because she knows I can take care of me. So a lot has happened in a year's time."

After attending ECFE Jane felt that she was better able to take care of herself. In her second interview she said, "I am taking better care of myself now. I act on my own behalf. I don't let myself just stew and sit on my feelings. Like the other night. Tom had been drinking and got unreasonably angry with Anne, and I just took Anne and myself outside to have a good time. Anne got mad back at him, and before I would have sheltered him from that, enabled him and not validated Anne's reality. Before Tom and I would have gotten into a big fight, and it would have ruined my night, and I wouldn't have been able to sleep all night. Now I just went on with my life."

When asked to sum up the changes she'd seen in herself and her family following her year of ECFE involvement, Jane reflected, "The big difference is my co-dependency is so much less. I am much more my own person, not so reactive and am a much better parent. I have faced a lot of truths from my childhood, and perhaps at 45 I am now able to put some of that behind me. I am a better role model for my daughter now. There is much less fighting in the home. Before my husband and I fought about his drinking all the time. Now it is a quieter, more secure place to live. I share some ideas of child rearing with my husband, handouts from class and things, and when he's not drinking he does these things. It follows suit. When I'm healthier, Anne's healthier, and he is healthier, too."

Jane is well aware that her family's problems are far from over. While feeling good about her progress as a parent, she acknowledged, "I'm afraid I'll go back to the old way. I need the outside influence. If I just stay home, I may get right back into it." With the ongoing support of her ECFE group and the information and strategies provided by the staff, Jane feels that her life and that of her daughter and husband will continue to be enriched.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Regarding Study Results

The majority of coded parent responses indicated change in parent knowledge, awareness, and understanding; perceptions and expectations; reported behaviors; and social support and self-confidence after up to one year of participation in an Early Childhood Family Education program. The table below lists the number and percent of "no change" and "change" parent responses for each of the three groups of interviewed parents. Each complete, clear response to each interview question was coded and counted for a total of 2,594 responses.

Parent Group	Number of Coded Responses		
	"No Change"	"Change"	Total Responses
General	874 (39.3%)	1346 (60.7%)	2220 (100%)
Single	76 (33%)	153 (67%)	229 (100%)
Teen	59 (41%)	86 (59%)	145 (100%)
Total Responses	1,009	1,585	2,594

The responses of the general and single parent groups were very similar, although single parents showed more change in regard to self-care. Teen parents exhibited the least amount of change and the greatest need for some type of further program involvement.

Five overall change themes were evident in the responses across interview questions.

These changes included:

1. Increased feelings of support from others, knowing they are "not alone" in their feelings and experiences and that other parents have the same problems and concerns;
2. An increased sense of confidence and self-esteem as a parent;
3. Increased knowledge, awareness, and understanding about children and child development and the parental role in relation to child development;
4. Changed perceptions and expectations for themselves as parents and for their children based on increased knowledge, awareness, and understanding about children and child development and the parental role in relation to child development; and
5. Changes in behavior based on increased feelings of support from others, increased self-confidence, increased knowledge, and changed perceptions and expectations of their children and themselves.

Parent responses reflected a predominant pattern of change in their feelings about themselves and their sense of support from others and in their knowledge, perceptions, and expectations about their children which together appear to form the basis for their subsequent behavior change.

Parents reflected a broad range of knowledge regarding child development and parenting in their interview responses. Some began the program with little or no knowledge or with misunderstandings of child development and behavior and showed movement to more developmentally appropriate knowledge and understandings. Other parents exhibited moderate to high knowledge levels when they entered the program and demonstrated more expansive, comprehensive, and complex understandings as they completed the program year. A small portion of parent responses reflected low knowledge levels, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptors and no significant change over a year of program participation.

Specific examples of behavior change indicated by parents throughout their responses fell into the following categories:

- Stopping to observe, listen, and think before acting with their children; movement from reaction to situations to forethought before action in situations
- Beginning to respond to their children based on the child's perspective, becoming more in tune with and sensitive to their children's needs and point of view
- Giving time and attention to their children
- Giving their children choices
- Encouraging their children to explore, to solve problems rather than doing things for them
- Repeatedly modeling new behaviors
- Talking about, explaining situations to their children
- Allowing their children to express feelings including anger
- Redirecting their children's behavior when needed
- Removing themselves or their children from tense situations for either one or both to regain composure
- Involving another adult when needed

Many parents indicated a larger repertoire of developmentally appropriate interaction strategies and/or more options and alternatives for responding to and interacting with their

children after a year of program participation. Some parents expressed a decrease in such behaviors as yelling, screaming, hitting, and spanking and a reduction in feelings of inadequacy and guilt.

Many parents expressed continuing struggles with the need for more patience and the challenges they experienced in disciplining or guiding their children's behavior. Circumstances which they could not always control, such as work, marital or financial difficulties, or being too tired or too busy, often interfered with their ability to make desired changes. Parents also found it hard to make changes in well established behavior patterns or life styles even though their awareness had been raised and a desire for change was evident. A number of parents expressed a recognition that it is "okay" not to be a perfect parent.

Parent responses reflected general satisfaction with family life. When problems with family life occurred, parents indicated they were most likely to "talk about" the problems as a primary means of problem solution. This often involved using problem solving skills that included identifying the problem and feelings about the problem, setting goals for addressing the problem, identifying strategies for making changes to meet these goals, and then taking action to make changes. Most of this communication in two-parent families was between spouses, but it also often involved other family members, friends, and teachers and other parents in the program. Enhanced family communication was most evident to parents in two-parent families when both parents were involved in some way in the program.

Parents were asked to identify how they took care of themselves. Responses reflected a continuum of ways parents did this. Some of the parents were doing little or nothing to take care of themselves; some did things to take care of themselves but felt guilty about it; some felt supported by their partners or families in taking care of themselves and in accomplishing household tasks, and some did not; and some appeared to do well taking care of themselves through a variety of activities.

Over three-fourths of the parents indicated a number of changes they observed in their children that they associated with program participation. These included:

- Improved social interaction and relationships, development of social skills;
- An increased sense of self-confidence and self-esteem;

- Language development and enhanced communication skills; and
- Expression of feelings.

All of these are commonly recognized elements of school readiness. Many parents indicated that their children were more likely to be ready to start kindergarten after program participation.

Regarding the Study Process

The process used throughout this evaluation study was as significant as the results themselves. The completion and success of the study depended on the combined efforts and expertise of the evaluation consultant, Michael Patton; the Early Childhood Family Education local program staff who committed hours of often unpaid time to the project; and the Minnesota Department of Education specialist, Betty Cooke, who was able to oversee the project and compile the report.

Not enough can be said for the critical role played by the staff from local programs who helped design the evaluation study process and interview questions, piloted the process and questions, conducted the actual interviews with parents, transcribed the interview data, analyzed the results, wrote case studies on individual representative parents, and responded to drafts of the report before it was completed. This process allowed for the development of a group of "inside experts" who clearly understood the program philosophy and practice and developed additional skills as interviewers and evaluators that will be useful to them and the program beyond this study. By being involved throughout the process, they developed strong ownership for the project and its results. In their role, they were able to identify implications of study results for further program and staff development, improvement, and evaluation which they are committed to acting upon because of the vital role they played in uncovering this information. They were more cautious and critical than outside evaluators were likely to have been in their analysis and interpretation of study results, thereby contributing to the validity of the evaluation process and results.

The following suggestions were made by the program interviewers/evaluators regarding the interview process, questions, and data analysis which would be useful in future participatory evaluation efforts such as this.

Process

- Some evaluators felt that the interview process used did not provide enough opportunity to elicit longer, more in-depth responses to the questions because follow-up, probe questions were used only on a limited basis by every interviewer. This was done intentionally to add consistency to the interview process across programs and interviewers, but it may have been a somewhat limiting factor.
- Most of the interviews were conducted in the facility where the program was held, some were done in homes, and some were done over the telephone. Evaluators thought this was likely to affect the responses given by the parents.
- For the most part, parents did not mind being interviewed and, in fact, found it useful and thought provoking in many cases. Consistent with the criteria for the study, both staff and parents saw opportunities in the questions for follow-up group discussion. Teen parents, particularly, appreciated the special attention of being interviewed, were proud of changes they noticed in themselves and their children, and used the interview as an opportunity for planning and goal setting. Staff also saw the questions as a useful approach to preprogram assessment to determine where parents "were at" as they entered the program.
- The intimacy of one-to-one staff to parent interviews worked well. It was hard for some of the interviewers to question and respond to parents during the interviews in a neutral manner since their usual role with parents is one of being supportive and informative. Some parents showed more comfort with the interview process during the postprogram interviews after up to a year in the program. This might have had an influence on their responses. Most staff noted that postprogram interview responses were longer and more in-depth than preprogram responses. Some staff noted that parent responses during the postprogram interviews may have actually revealed more problems in parent-child and family interaction than were evident in their preprogram interviews because of the increased rapport and trust they had established with staff and their greater comfort in revealing more about themselves and their families. These staff interpreted this to be a sign of growth in the parents and a strength of the program.
- Scheduling interview times was sometimes a challenge.
- Transcription of the interview data was clearly the most challenging part of the process. Many program staff did not have the equipment and expertise for this and would have appreciated more specific suggestions at the beginning of the study regarding the importance of good recording equipment such as the use of microcassettes, dictaphones, etc. and expertise in their use. Also, some interviewers were concerned about confidentiality issues with the staff they involved in transcription of the tapes.

Questions

- For the most part, staff thought the wording and sequencing of questions worked well because responses to the questions did show change.
- Question 4a, "What do you do when you want to show your child love?" was worded in a way that the evaluators thought led parents to think mostly of physical forms of showing love. Responses focused mainly on "giving hugs and kisses." The wording of the question may have missed other, less tangible forms of showing children love.
- Question 6, "What do you do when your child is angry?" was not found to be an appropriate question for parents of infants as were several of the other questions. Slight wording changes in several questions would have solved this problem.
- The wording of question 8b, "When you have a problem with your family life, maybe something you don't like about your family or something you want to change, what do you do?" was found to be threatening to some parents. It was intended to get at the degree and type of social support parents experienced prior to and after program participation, and many evaluators thought the wording did not yield this type of information as well as other wording might have.

Data Analysis

- Staff involved in analysis found it very helpful to read through all the responses to their question first and then sort the responses into categories before starting to cut and tape. Also, as they read responses, staff found it useful to make notations about the type of change within each change category.
- The age of the child was not always clear as evaluators analyzed the individual questions. It would have been helpful if the child's age in months as the parent and child entered the program would have been built into each parent's code. Also, it would have been helpful to be more specific about the coding system to be used throughout the process to identify interviewed parents in all programs.
- Because of the interrelated nature of several of the questions, some small group members wished they could have read the responses of parents to other related questions to provide further insight into the way they categorized and grouped the responses to the question they analyzed. However, staff thought it worked well for each group to work on a single question.
- One small group working on data analysis stated: "This is so labor intensive!" This reflection and other similar ones such as "overwhelming" and "tedious" were expressed by several staff during the data analysis process. Some suggested that it would have been helpful to have had more individuals involved in the analysis process because of

the huge quantity of data to analyze. At the same time, the process was described as "interesting" and "absorbing." In spite of the complexity, intensity, volume of data, and sheer work involved in these two days, all comments from staff indicated appreciation for the organization and clarity of the process, a true enjoyment of the process, and feelings of satisfaction in knowing they had made an important contribution to the study and the ongoing quality of the program. They also expressed sensing a feeling of affirmation for their work in the program and accomplishment of the mission and goals of the program because of the clear changes noted in many parent responses.

- Despite the diversity among programs and parents interviewed, evaluators noted a high degree of consistency in the type and quality of responses provided by parents across programs. Also, staff expressed interest in seeing responses to the questions from a statewide perspective.
- Staff acknowledged that the analysis required them to make "judgment calls," but they also felt their judgments were valid because they were made by at least three individuals and verified by another person after the two-day analysis process.
- Staff raised the issue of parents being likely to give what they felt were "socially acceptable" answers to the questions, but at the same time they did not feel that this was true in the case of most parents interviewed. Others expressed concern that parent responses may have depended on what was going on in the lives of the parents on the particular day they were interviewed. This, however, is likely to be a factor in any kind of interview process used in evaluation.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following provides a list and discussion of implications and recommendations for curriculum and program development and further evaluation based on study results and the input of Early Childhood Family Education staff involved in data analysis.

For Curriculum and Program Development

1. Incorporate knowledge of child development and parent-child relations/family relations into all programming.

Some parents, especially teen parents, come to programs with little or no knowledge related to being parents. Others enter programs with more knowledge and need to continue building on this base as they develop deeper understandings and more effective applications to everyday parenting situations. This diversity in knowledge levels has implications for at least informally getting a sense of parents' knowledge levels when they begin involvement. This also highlights the value of a program based on universal eligibility for all families where parents at all knowledge levels are integrated together in classes and can learn from one another.

2. Provide continuous opportunities to address ongoing issues related to guidance of children.

As programs provide information to parents about developmentally appropriate parent-child interaction strategies, they need to help parents think about the intrusive nature of some interaction strategies and consider approaches/strategies that are more respectful and supportive of the child and less intrusive. Closely related to this issue is the need to help parents become better observers of their children, "tuning in" to cues from their children and being more sensitive to their children's needs and interests. Also, a clearer understanding of some techniques used and talked about is needed, e.g., redirection, bribery, threats, consequences, choices, use of "time out," etc.

3. Communicate the importance of support from others.

Knowing that they are "not alone" and that others share common concerns and experiences is one of the strongest benefits of the program expressed by parents, especially by single parents. Also, an increased sense of support from others is likely to enhance the effectiveness of new understandings and insights and their impact on problem solving and meaningful behavior change.

4. Increase recognition of the value and use of parent-child interaction as an especially powerful learning experience for parents.

Parent-child interaction time provides parents with an opportunity to see and better understand the actual implementation of some of the approaches/strategies suggested through modeling of developmentally appropriate behaviors by staff and other parents. It is also an excellent opportunity for parents to develop and refine observation and listening skills and "tuning in" to their children as a way to more effectively support their children's development. Since it is often difficult to make the transition from "knowing" to "doing," it also provides parents a chance to practice new behaviors and receive prompt and specific feedback from staff and other adults.

5. Clearly communicate program goals to parents.

Parent responses occasionally indicate a lack of understanding of the rationale for program activities. It is important for staff to communicate overall goals as well as reasons for doing specific activities and approaches with children and parents.

6. Continue emphasis on parent self-esteem and parent self-care as being of value both to parents personally and to their families.

Parent responses indicate some recognition of the value of self-esteem and self-care and their direct relationship to children's self-esteem and self-care. Yet many parents show a lack of confidence and self-esteem and seem to do little to take care of themselves. This shows a need for further emphasis regarding these issues.

7. More explicitly incorporate development of family communication and problem solving skills into program content.

"Talking together" with partners, other family members, or friends is clearly the most common way parents deal with solving family problems. Therefore, it is important to give parents tools for doing this more effectively.

8. Provide ongoing, weekly, long-term participation/involvement opportunities for parents.

Long-term, regular involvement contributes to:

- Increasing knowledge and understanding, changing perceptions and expectations;
- Increasing confidence and self-esteem, helping parents recognize and build on their strengths;
- Building support networks; and
- Developing skills leading to behavior change.

Behaviors parents use in interaction with their children are likely to have been formed over time and are strongly influenced by their own childhood experiences. Change in such established behavior patterns is slow and challenging and is likely to require consistent involvement and support over time. More intense, long-term involvement is particularly indicated for parents who are struggling with very stressful personal and family situations and for teen parents.

9. Increase involvement of both parents.

When both parents are involved, communication is stronger because of shared information and ideas, and family relationships and general well being seem to be enhanced.

Involvement of other support persons for single parents when fathers or mothers are not available is also desirable.

10. Encourage and continue to create ways for family members to spend more time together.

Time together is clearly valued and seems to enhance personal and family life for many parents and their children. Yet it is a challenge for many families to create or preserve and productively use this time together. Early Childhood Family Education, through its ongoing programming and special events, is an enjoyable and productive way for young families to spend time together. It also acts as a catalyst for improving the overall quality of time family members spend together.

For Further Evaluation

1. Conduct more extensive and extended follow-up of the program participants interviewed.

It is evident that the length and intensity of involvement of the parents interviewed is only a beginning for some of these parents in their movement to more positive perceptions and

forms of parent-child interaction. For other parents the length and level of involvement they experienced may be sufficient to meet their needs. In order to gain a better understanding of the impact of the length and intensity of program involvement on parent change, the parents already interviewed as well as other groups of parent participants should be studied in more depth over longer periods of time.

2. Do more extensive studies of the different types of parent change noted in relation to the five change themes identified, i.e., increased feelings of support from others, increased self-esteem, increased knowledge, and changes in perceptions and expectations and behavior.

Although these are clearly interrelated types of parent change, it may be useful to study each kind of change identified separately and in more depth as well as their interrelationships.

3. Conduct more extensive and diverse Early Childhood Family Education outcome studies.

This study was only a beginning in the wide array of potential outcome studies that would be valuable to do in order to better understand the impact of the program on families involved. Other types of outcome studies might include:

- Observational studies of parent behavior and parent-child interaction
- Studies of change in the parent-child relationship
- Studies of specific change in children
- Studies of change in family interaction
- Studies of the role of the program in the development and enhancement of feelings of support from others including spouse or partner, closely involved extended family members, and others.

Longitudinal studies of parents, children, and families would be particularly useful in many of these areas.

4. Conduct studies focusing on the relationship between program processes and outcomes.

As with any program like Early Childhood Family Education, there is a great need to better understand the relationship between different types of program delivery and processes and the outcomes for parents, children, and families. There is also a need for clearer documentation of program processes to facilitate understanding of the connection between these and different outcomes.

5. Conduct studies of the impact of the program on specific parent populations.

Much more needs to be known about the types of programming most effective in addressing the needs of specific parent groups such as the groups of single and teen parents interviewed as a part of this study. "Do different groups of parents need different types of programs, and if so, what should these programs look like?" are the kinds of questions that need to be studied in greater depth.

6. Study the impact of involvement in the study on Early Childhood Family Education staff and programs.

The involvement of local program staff in the evaluation process was considered a key to the success of the type of evaluation conducted. It would be helpful to gather information from staff involved to note possible changes in their perceptions and practices and improvement in their programs because of what they learned throughout their involvement in this process. Since it was intended that the evaluation processes used were to be incorporated into everyday program activities, it would also be useful to know if and how this may be happening in the programs involved. This type of study would increase understanding of the value of participatory evaluation, the value of the use of "inside" evaluators, and the entire nature of the concept of evaluation as an integrated part of ongoing program processes.

APPENDICES

ECFE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Developed by ECPE Program Staff
Statewide, Feb. 21, 1990
Pilot Effort

Introduction: We want to begin by giving you a chance to think about some of the things you do as a parent. We know that no two children are exactly alike and no two parents are the same. These questions will get at some of the ways you approach being a parent and some of your thoughts about your child. There aren't any right or wrong answers. Let's begin with some questions about your child?

[Note: For parents with more than one child in the program, it will be helpful to have the parent pick one to focus on.]

QUESTIONS

1. Tell me a little about your child? What is your child like?

[Probe, if needed: What are some of the things your child is doing these days?]

2. Okay, your child is _____ years old.
What are _____ year olds like?

[Probe, if needed: What stands out to you about _____ year olds?]

3. What do you and your child enjoy doing together?

4. We know there are times when most parents feel really full of love for a child and other times when they don't feel so loving.

a. What do you do when you want to show your child love?

b. (Optional) What do you do when you don't feel so loving?

5. How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do?

(Optional clarifications, if needed: How do you try to get your child to mind you, or obey you, or do what you want?)

6. What do you do when your child is angry?
 - a. What about when your child is afraid, what do you do?
7. What are the important things your child needs to learn from you?

TRANSITION STATEMENT: Okay, we've been talking a lot about your child and what you do with your child, now I'd like to ask you to think some about yourself as a parent. We've found that most parents have some things they feel they do well as a parent, and some things they don't feel they do so well.

8. What do you think you do well as a parent?
 - a. What do you not do so well as a parent?
 - Optional: b. What do you think your strengths are as a parent?
 - c. What are some weaknesses you think you have as a parent?
9. Now let's switch to your family life more generally.
 - a. What do you like about your family life?
 - b. What don't you like about your family life?
10. As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself?
11. (Optional) How do you feel about answering these kinds of questions?

[Probe, if needed:] What's it like for you to answer these questions?

GUIDELINES FOR PILOT TEST OF ECPE QUESTIONS

Question selection

1. Only ask questions you're comfortable asking. It will be helpful to have you try out as many questions as possible, but if you aren't comfortable with a question for any reason, skip it.
2. You may add your own questions to fit your own needs and interests, but do so only after you've asked these questions.

Interview Approach Options

1. Full group discussion
2. Focus group (6-8 people in a group interview)
3. Individual interviews (one-on-one)
 - a. conducted by teaching staff
 - b. conducted by program coordinator
 - c. conducted by volunteers
 - d. conducted by experienced parents (e.g., long-time participants)
4. Written responses

For evaluation purposes the best data will come from individual interviews, but that may not be the most practical way to build the process into your program. We want to experiment with these different approaches to get the best match between supporting and reinforcing program processes and getting evaluation data. The first priority is supporting your program process and parents.

Details and Variations

1. For the June analysis we'd like at least five parents from each program or each participating staff person.
2. You are free to choose any parents you want. New parents will probably provide the best change data. For pilot purposes we'll learn the most by getting experience from a variety of types of parents.
3. Plan to get both baseline interviews and end-of-program interviews. You'll need to identify parents so that you can match baseline and end-of-program responses.
4. If you can't get new parents, it's okay to do end-of-program interviews only. You may want to try some retrospective variations, e.g., "How would you have answered that question when you were just beginning ECPE?"

5. Keep careful track of what you do and how you do it. Write down this information. Don't rely on your memory. The details of what you did will be important.
6. Make evaluative notes. What works? What doesn't work? What seems to make the difference in what works and doesn't work? This is a pilot experiment. You're the experimenters. Observe your own process and make notes of what you learn. Keep track of how long the interviews take. This will be important for future design considerations.
7. Add basic background information about the parents:
 - socioeconomic status
 - ethnic and/or racial status
 - new or continuing parent
 - age of child
 - family situation
 - urban, rural, suburban
8. Don't refer to this as an evaluation. This is a process for helping parents reflect on their experiences as parents. The first priority is supporting parent education and facilitating the program's reflective processes. We believe that in doing that you can also systematically gather useful and valid evaluative information. However, there are such negative connotations associated with "evaluation" that we'd prefer to avoid the term. But do what is comfortable. We're not trying to deceive people. We're trying to set priorities and emphasize support.

Interviewing Style

1. Do the interview as straight as possible. Don't explain questions beyond the probes and clarifications listed in the interview. If a question doesn't work, just say, "Let's just skip that one. Not all of the questions make sense for everyone. Let's just go on to the next question."
2. Be friendly, caring, and sensitive but don't help with answers. Don't lead, suggest, illustrate, judge, be surprised, be shocked, give advice...just interview. If the parent has questions, tell them you'll be happy to answer their questions after the interview.

Recording Data

1. We must have quotations. That means a tape recorded and transcribed response if at all possible. Notes are better than nothing, but a poor second choice.
2. Explain the use of the tape recorder as wanting to be sure to get exactly what they say. Be respectful. If the recorder intrudes, don't use it. My experience is that if you're comfortable with the recorder, they will be.

Analysis

1. For the June 27 analysis session we need the baseline and end-of-program interviews for each individual or group attached together by question. This means the baseline and end of program answers to question #1 for parent #1 attached together. We'll analyze the data by question.
2. Keep a master copy of the data for yourself. We'll be cutting and marking on what you bring to the analysis session. Don't bring your only originals for analysis.
3. Feel free to do some analysis of answers and themes before you come. Indeed, I encourage you to. This is your data.

Unanswered Questions

1. Do what seems to you to make sense. Remember, we're experimenting.
2. Call Betty Cooke at the State Department of Education for clarifications.
3. Stay calm. Be relaxed. Enjoy. There's nothing riding on this effort except the future of early childhood and parent education. (Just kidding.) Be happy. Don't worry. This is the trial period. There's plenty of time to worry next year when we do the real thing.



Minnesota Department of Education

Capitol Square 550 Cedar Street Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101

DATE: July, 1990

TO: Early Childhood Family Education Parent Outcome Evaluators

FROM: Betty Cooke, Early Childhood Family Education Specialist *Betty Cooke*

RE: Statewide Evaluation of Parent Outcomes of
Early Childhood Family Education Participants

Enclosed are the following materials you need to conduct the parent outcome study:

1. The interview questions and process.
2. The list of programs specifically assigned to interview designated groups of parents.
3. A summary form for recording information about the interview process used.
4. A form for recording a profile of participation for each parent which includes information about the forms to use for obtaining parent background information.

We would like to have you return a copy of the transcribed preprogram interview data to me as soon as you complete all preprogram interviews and have the data completely transcribed and prepared for analysis as Michael describes in the process materials enclosed (Do not send your originals!). We may have an opportunity to begin analysis of the preprogram data before June, 1991, so we are asking that it be sent to us before our planned analysis session next June. If at all possible, I would appreciate receiving this preprogram data by March 1, 1991. Mark each piece of paper with preprogram data with the parent's name or the code number you give them which corresponds to the name or code number on their background information and profile of participation forms.

I have confirmed the availability of the Earle Brown Center for our analysis session next year. As we decided at our meeting this summer, we will meet for two days next summer to analyze the data on Tuesday and Wednesday, June 25 and 26, 1991. To this meeting you will bring:

- (1) all postprogram data in the format Michael has requested,
- (2) the Interview Process Record form, and
- (3) the Participant Background Information and Profile of Participation form with the Enrollment Information form and the Participant Questionnaire form (replacing the old Demographic Survey--you'll receive a copy with your August coordinators' mailing) stapled to it for each parent interviewed.

If you have questions about the details of the interview process, call me throughout the year at (612) 296-6130. Be sure to carefully read all guidelines from Michael and me because attention to detail is very important in a study such as this. It feels like we are all engaged in an exciting, innovative approach to evaluating our Early Childhood Family Education program parent outcomes, and I hope this excitement is shared by everyone involved as we proceed with this interview process throughout the coming school year.

ECFE PRE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Finalized by ECFE Program Staff
Statewide, June 27, 1990

PREPROGRAM VERSION (fall)

[Note: The preprogram or pretest is different than the Spring posttest or post-program version.]

Introduction: We want to begin by giving you a chance to think about some of the things you do as a parent. We know that no two children are exactly alike and no two parents are the same. These questions will get at some of the ways you approach being a parent and some of your thoughts about your child and family. There aren't any right or wrong answers. Let's begin with some questions about your child?

[Note: For parents with more than one child in the program, have the parent pick one to focus on, preferably the oldest.]

QUESTIONS

1. Tell me a little about your child? What is your child like?

[Probe, if needed: What are some of the things
your child is doing these days?]

2. Okay, your child is _____ years old.
What are _____ year olds like?

[Probe, if needed: What stands out to you about _____ year olds?]

3. What do you and your child enjoy doing together?

4. We know there are times when most parents feel really full of love for a child and other times when they don't feel so loving.

a. What do you do when you want to show your child love?

b. What do you do when you don't feel so loving?

5. How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do?

[Optional clarifications, if needed: How do you try to get your child to mind you, or obey you, or do what you want?]

6. What do you do when your child is angry?

TRANSITION STATEMENT: Okay, we've been talking a lot about your child and what you do with your child, now I'd like to ask you to think some about yourself as a parent. We've found that most parents have some things they feel they do well as a parent, and some things they don't feel they do so well.

7. What do you think you do well as a parent?

a. What do you not do so well as a parent?

8. Now let's switch to your family life more generally. At times we all like some things about family life and dislike some things.

a. What do you like about your family life?

b. When you have a problem with your family life, maybe something you don't like about your family or something you want to change, what do you do?

9. As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself?

10. (Optional) How do you feel about answering these kinds of questions?

[Probe, if needed:] What's it like for you to answer these questions?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO TALK WITH ME ABOUT YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR PARENTING. WE LOOK FORWARD TO HAVING YOU IN OUR PROGRAM. LATER IN THE YEAR I HOPE WE'LL GET ANOTHER CHANCE TO TALK INDIVIDUALLY AND DO SOME FOLLOW UP ON YOUR EXPERIENCES.

ECFE POST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Finalized by ECFE Program Staff
Statewide, June 27, 1990

POSTPROGRAM VERSION (spring)

[Note: The postprogram or posttest is different than the fall pretest or preprogram version.]

YOU WILL NEED THE PRETEST RESULTS FOR QUESTION # 7 TO DO THIS INTERVIEW

Introduction: At the time you were just beginning the program you may recall that I interviewed you [or -- you were interviewed -- if interviewer has changed] about some things you did as a parent. This is a follow-up interview to see how things look to you now. Some of the questions are pretty much the same and your answers may be the same, or they might be different. There are no right or wrong answers since we know that no two children are exactly alike and no two parents are the same. These questions will get at some of the ways you approach being a parent and some of your thoughts about your child and family. Let's begin with some questions about your child?

[Note: For parents with more than one child in the program, it is important to have the parent pick the same child as the pretest.]

QUESTIONS

1. Tell me a little about your child? What is your child like?

[Probe, if needed: What are some of the things
your child is doing these days?]

2. Okay, your child is now _____ years old.
What are _____ year olds like?

[Probe, if needed:
What stands out to you about _____ year olds?]

3. What do you and your child enjoy doing together?

3a. Has the way you spend time together changed in any way in the last few months?

4. We know there are times when most parents feel really full of love for a child and other times when they don't feel so loving.

a. What do you do when you want to show your child love?

b. What do you do when you don't feel so loving?

c. Has the way you express feelings to your child changed in any ways in the last few months?

5. How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do?

[Optional clarifications, if needed: How do you try to get your child to mind you, or obey you, or do what you want?]

a. Have your approaches to getting your child to do things changed in any ways in the last few months?

6. What do you do when your child is angry?

TRANSITION STATEMENT: Okay, we've been talking a lot about your child and what you do with your child, now I'd like to ask you to think some about yourself as a parent. We've found that most parents have some things they feel they do well as a parent, and some things they don't feel they do so well.

7. What do you think you do well as a parent?

a. In your interview at the beginning of the program you were asked what you didn't do well as a parent.

You said: " _____
_____ "

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT NOW?

/continued

8. Now let's switch to your family life more generally.
At times we all like some things about family life and dislike some things.
- a. What do you like about your family life?
 - b. When you have a problem with your family life, maybe something you don't like about your family or something you want to change, what do you do?
9. As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself?
- a. Has the way you take care of yourself changed in any way in the last few months?
10. What changes, if any, have you noted in your child or family from participating in this program?
- a. What are the main things you yourself have gotten from participating in the program?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO TALK WITH ME
ABOUT YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR PARENTING. YOUR PERSPECTIVE
IS REALLY HELPFUL TO US. THANKS.

GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTERING INTERVIEWS

1. The preprogram (pretest) and postprogram (posttest) interviews are different. The post interview has more and different questions.
2. You must have the results of the preprogram interview with you to do the post interview in order to (1) be sure that you're asking questions about the same child (for parents with more than one child in the program) and (2) to follow up question # 7.
3. For the statewide evaluation only individual interviews will be used.

(You can use focus groups for your own purposes with a different sample, but not for the statewide aggregate evaluation. We found that individual data and focus group data did not mix well in the analysis.)

Sampling

1. For the overall study choose only:

NEW, FIRST-TIME PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS.

Where possible, select parents whose oldest or only child is participating in the program, i.e., are relatively inexperienced parents.

2. Sample Size: Taking into account your typical drop-out rate, sample enough parents at the beginning to end up with eight (8) at the end for whom you have both pre and post interviews.

Thus if you have a 30% drop-out rate, begin with 11 pre interviews and you should end up with at least 7 or 8.

3. Randomly sample.

A random sample will increase credibility.

How you randomly sample will depend on the total number of possible participants from which you are sampling. For very small programs no special sampling is necessary because all participants who meet the criteria will be included.

For programs with about 25 or fewer potential participants who meet the criteria, put the names on equal size pieces of paper folded so the names aren't visible. Put the names in a box, bag or jar and draw them out one at a time. The first name drawn is #1 in the sample. Draw out all names and give every name a number. That way if someone refuses to participate you go to the next number. Thus to get 11 interviews you may have to go down to #15 because of 4 refusals.

For programs with a lot more than about 25 potential participants, prepare an alphabetical list of names and sample every 3rd, 4th or 5th name in order to end up with 20 names. Start at number 2 on the list. So if you have a list of 100, you'll take every 5th name. That will give you 20 names. Then put those 20 names in random order using the procedure described above of drawing names "out of a hat." The reason for putting 20 names in the hat, even though you only need 11 or 12 to interview, is to provide replacements for refusals and increase the true randomization of the sample.

When to interview

Pre-interviews should take place before the program begins. Where that is not possible, the interview must take place as soon as possible to minimize the effects of the program on the pre-interview results.

The latest date for pre-interviews is January, 1991 (primarily for rural programs which do not have active fall recruitment).

Post interviews can be done anytime after the person has been in the program for about two "quarters" or equivalent, the later the better to allow as much program participation as possible. If at all possible wait to do the post interviews until April or May for Spring quarter participants.

Recording the data

Interviews are to be tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interviews can be either in person or by telephone. It is critical that full and complete quotations be recorded and transcribed for all interviews and all questions.

Explain the use of the tape recorder as wanting to be sure to get exactly what they say. Be respectful. If the recorder intrudes, don't use it, but you'll need verbatim notes. My experience is that if you're comfortable with the recorder, they will be.

Check tape recorders before each interview. (Some pilot data were lost because of tape recorder malfunctions. It can happen to you.

Ask the questions exactly as worded. Repeat questions if necessary, but do not elaborate, explain, or help with answers. Don't explain questions beyond the probes and clarifications listed in the interview. If a question doesn't work, just say, "Let's just skip that one. Not all of the questions make sense for everyone. Let's just go on to the next question."

Be friendly, caring, and sensitive but don't help with answers. Don't lead, suggest, illustrate, judge, be surprised, be shocked, give advice...just interview. If the parent

has questions, tell them you'll be happy to answer their questions after the interview.

Interviewer comments should be transcribed with answers so that we know what interviewers said that may have affected answers.

Have the participants complete the ENROLLMENT INFORMATION form and the PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE so that we will have the participant background information we need with the interview data. Also complete the INTERVIEW PROCESS RECORD which keeps track of what you did, how you did it, and any observations or reactions you have to the interviewing process.

Don't refer to this as an evaluation. This is a process for helping parents reflect on their experiences as parents. It is part of the program experience, not a separate "evaluation." There are negative connotations associated with the term "evaluation" so we'd prefer to avoid the term. We're not trying to deceive people. We're just trying to increase comfort and emphasize reflection and support.

Analysis

We'll work together on the statewide analysis for two full days, June 25-6, 1991.

We will need two different sets of the data for analysis.

The first set will be by question. Attach the pre and post answer together question by question with a separate page for each pre question and each post question. This means the pre and post answers to question #1 for parent #1 attached together. We'll analyze the data first question by question.

The second set will be the entire pre and post interview for each individual together. Thus the second level of analysis is individual by individual rather than question by question.

Keep a master copy of the data for yourself. We'll be cutting and marking on what you bring to the analysis session.

Don't bring your only originals for analysis.

Feel free to do some analysis of answers and themes before you come. Indeed, I encourage you to. This is your data.

Unanswered Questions

1. Do what seems to you to make sense. Remember, we're trying to get the best data possible. Make note of exceptions and problems.
2. Call Betty Cooke at the State Department of Education for clarifications.

Programs Interviewing Designated Groups of Parents

Teen Parents:

Duluth
Minneapolis
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan
St. Paul
Winona

Single Parents:

Duluth
Forest Lake
Monticello
Mounds View
Redwood Falls
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan
Waseca
Winona, if needed

Parents from Two-Parent, Low-Income Family:

Columbia Heights
Forest Lake
Minneapolis
Mounds View
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan
Shakopee-Chaska
St. Cloud
Waseca
Winona, if needed

(Consider a family low-income if their household's total yearly income before taxes, as indicated on the Participant Questionnaire, falls in one of the first three categories on the form, i.e., their income is \$14,999 or less.)

We need approximately 30 parents in the study from each of these three groups. I would like to have one person from each program listed give me a call or send me a note indicating how many you can do in each category. I know it is easier for some of you to do more than others because of the size and diversity of your programs. If your school district is listed, and you have changed your mind about being able to find enough new participants in these special groups to interview, that is fine. Just let me know what you decide. It would be helpful if some of you interview only 2 or 3 parents in any of these categories. Thanks for your interest in interviewing these particular parents!

Interview Process Record

Program _____ Date _____

1. Person(s) conducting interviews:

Name(s) of Program Staff Involved

Position

2. Type and number of parents interviewed:

Parent Category	Preprogram	Number	Postprogram
a. New, first-time parents			
b. Teen parents			
c. Single parents			
d. Parents from two-parent, low-income family			
e. Other, only if it becomes necessary (indicate category):			

3. Interview process used (Check one(s) which applies):

____ Individual face-to-face interviews

____ Telephone interviews

4. Average length of interviews: _____5. Method of recording interviews (Check one(s) which applies):

____ On tape recorder

____ Other, only if it becomes necessary (explain): _____

6. Observations/reactions to interviewing process: _____**Return this form on or before June 25, 1991 to:**Betty Cooke, Minnesota Department of Education, Early Childhood Family Education
991 Capitol Square, 550 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55101

PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND PROFILE OF PARTICIPATION

Parent Name _____

Program _____ Date _____

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Have each parent interviewed complete an Enrollment Information form and the new Participant Questionnaire form (replacing the old Demographic Survey--you'll receive a copy with your August coordinators' mailing) soon after they enter the program. Since the Participant Questionnaire form is meant to be kept confidential, ask verbal permission of the parent to keep a copy of the form with their answers to the interview questions. Attach a copy of each of these two forms to this form. On this form keep a record of the parent's participation during the time the parent is enrolled in the program during the 1990-91 school year.

PROFILE OF PARTICIPATION

SERIES ENROLLMENT: On the next sheet indicate title of series (e.g., Parents and Babies, Terrific Toddlers, Daddy and Me, Siblings Without Rivalry, etc.), type of series (e.g., basic program series with parent education/discussion, early childhood education, and parent-child interaction; parent-child together series; parents only series, etc.), audience for series (e.g., teen parents, single parents, fathers only, working parents, any parents, etc.), the total number of hours the parent attended the series, and any additional information about the series that would be important to record. If the parent attends more than one series per quarter, attach an additional sheet(s) with this same information about the additional series attended and the quarter(s) attended.

HOME VISITS: Indicate the number of home visits made below, the approximate length in hours of each visit, the total number of hours the parent participated in home visits, and any additional information about the home visits that would be important to record.

Number of visits: _____ Length in hours of each: _____

Total hours participated: _____

Other information about home visits: _____

SERIES ENROLLMENT

Fall:

Title: _____

Type: _____

Audience: _____

Total hours attended: _____

Other information about series: _____

Winter:

Title: _____

Type: _____

Audience: _____

Total hours attended: _____

Other information about series: _____

Spring:

Title: _____

Type: _____

Audience: _____

Total hours attended: _____

Other information about series: _____

OTHER PARTICIPATION EXPERIENCES

Special Family Events, Field Trips, etc.: List each, the length in hours of each, and the total number of hours the parent participated.

Hours Participated

Total hours participated: _____

Speaker Nights, Single Session Workshops, etc.: List each, the length in hours of each, and the total number of hours the parent participated.

Hours Participated

Total hours participated: _____

Others (list each): List each, the length in hours of each, and the total number of hours the parent participated.

Hours Participated

Total hours participated: _____

Grand total number of hours parent participated in series and other activities during

1990-91 school year: _____

Minnesota Department of Education	EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE	ED-02005-01
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GENERAL INFORMATION : This questionnaire should be completed only **ONE TIME** per school year **FOR EACH FAMILY ENROLLED** in the Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) Program (only one participant per family should complete this questionnaire). This information is requested from each family served, and will be used for program planning and evaluation. **DO NOT** write your name on this form. The information that you provide will be kept confidential and **WILL NOT** be directly connected with you or your family.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE!!

1.	How long have you participated in the ECFE Program (check one only)?		
	☐ a. Less than 3 months	☐ c. One year to 2 years	☐ e. More than three years
	☐ b. Three months to a year	☐ d. Two years to 3 years	
2.	Your sex (check one only): ☐ a. Male ☐ b. Female		
3.	Your age (check one only): ☐ a. Under 20 years old ☐ c. 30 to 39 years old		
	☐ b. 20 to 29 years old	☐ d. 40 years old or older	
4.	Your current marital status (check one only): ☐ a. Never Married ☐ c. Widowed		
	☐ b. Married	☐ d. Divorced or Separated	
5.	Your educational background (check highest level completed):		
	☐ a. 8th grade or less	☐ d. Some vocational or trade school	☐ g. Associate Degree
	☐ b. Some high school, no diploma	☐ e. Completed vocational/trade school program	☐ h. Bachelor's Degree
	☐ c. High school diploma/GED	☐ f. Some college, no degree	☐ i. Graduate or professional school degree
6.	Your current employment status (check one only):		
	☐ a. Unemployed, not seeking employment (includes full-time homemaker)	☐ c. Employed less than 25 hours per week	
	☐ b. Unemployed, seeking employment	☐ d. Employed 25 hours or more per week	
7.	What is the total number of people living in your household (check one only)?		
	☐ a. One	☐ c. Three	☐ e. Five
	☐ b. Two	☐ d. Four	☐ f. Six
			☐ g. Seven
			☐ h. Eight or more
8.	What is your household's total yearly income, before taxes (check one only)?		
	☐ a. Under \$5,000	☐ d. \$15,000 to \$19,999	☐ g. \$30,000 to \$34,999
	☐ b. \$5,000 to \$9,999	☐ e. \$20,000 to \$24,999	☐ h. \$35,000 to \$49,999
	☐ c. \$10,000 to \$14,999	☐ f. \$25,000 to \$29,999	☐ i. \$50,000 or more
9.	What is YOUR racial/ethnic background (check one only)?		
	☐ a. White, Non-Hispanic	☐ c. Hispanic	☐ e. American Indian/Alaskan Native
	☐ b. Black, Non-Hispanic	☐ d. Asian/Pacific Islander	
10.	How long have you lived in this school district (check one only)?		
	☐ a. Less than 1 year	☐ c. 2 to 3 years	☐ e. 4 to 5 years
	☐ b. 1 to 2 years	☐ d. 3 to 4 years	☐ f. 5 to 7 years
			☐ g. 7 to 10 years
			☐ h. More than 10 years
11.	Please check all programs in which you and/or members of your household participate (check all that apply):		
	☐ a. Head Start	☐ d. Food Stamps	☐ g. Day Care Home
	☐ b. Special Education	☐ e. AFDC	☐ h. Child Care Center
	☐ c. WIC	☐ f. Free or Reduced Price School Lunch	☐ i. Nursery School

DRAFT--June, 1991

PARENT OUTCOME STUDY

MAJOR THEMES
BASED ON PREPROGRAM INTERVIEW DATA

Questions 1 & 2:

Tell me a little about your child? What is your child like?

Okay, your child is _____ years old. What are _____ year olds like?

•**Specific knowledge of own child**

•**General knowledge of child development** (look for specific vocabulary, developmentally appropriate/inappropriate vocabulary; reflections of general knowledge of child development within knowledge of specific child)

- Physical description/appearance
- Disposition/temperament/activity level (emotions)
- Description of development/developmental expectations

Social
Cognitive
Language
Physical

Question 3:

What do you and your child enjoy doing together?

•**Type of activities/interactions**

•**Age appropriateness/inappropriateness of activities/interactions**

Physical activity/play
Outdoor play/activities
Playing with toys
Reading books
Singing together
Talking together
Working together in kitchen
Attending classes together
Visiting others together
Eating out together
Shopping, going to grocery store together
Going to movies
Watching TV together

Questions 4-7:

•**Strategies of parent-child interaction/parent behavior**

4a. What do you do when you want to show your child love?

Give verbal expressions
Give physical expressions
Give verbal and tangible rewards/treats, buy things for child
Do something special together/spend time together

- 4b. What do you do when you don't feel so loving?
- Involve other parent
 - Involve another adult
 - Use verbal reprimand/yell/scold/tell "no"
 - Physically remove/isolate child, time out/quiet time for child
 - Remove self from situation
 - Interest child in things child can do alone
 - Give simple, clear explanations
 - Redirect
 - Give in
 - Pause/take deep breath/count/think before acting
 - Spank child
 - Feel sorry for child
5. How do you try to get your child to do what you want him/her to do?
- Tell him/her what to do without explanation, give no choice, tell "no"
 - Repeat until child does it
 - Show child what to do, give example over and over again
 - Reason, explain situation
 - Ask child to express feelings
 - Give encouragement
 - Give choices
 - Give choices with consequences
 - Offer rewards, remove privileges, bargain/bribe/threaten
 - Compromise
 - Child proof environment
 - Remove/time out/isolate
 - Adapt to child's needs
 - Make a game of situation, use humor
 - Physically punish/spank/slap hand
6. What do you do when your child is angry?
- Physically hold child to help get control
 - Separate child awhile so he/she can collect thoughts/regain composure
 - Reason/explain situation after child calms down
 - Allow child to be angry/let scream/let express
 - Leave alone/ignore
 - Distract/try to involve in something else/redirect
 - Give in/give what want
 - Tell child you don't want to hear it/tell him/her to stop
 - Yell at child
 - Get into power struggle
 - Laugh
 - Help fix the problem
 - Coax/bribe
 - Hold firm to limit
 - Teach child self-control skills

7. What do you think you do well as a parent?

Not a lot of "nos"/limits
Clear limits, discipline
Encourage child to explore/try different activities/learn on own/allow for mess
Praise child
Give time/spend time/play with/read with
Be there when he/she needs me
Do things together as a family
Act like a child with child
Give unconditional love; let him/her know they're loved
Support child's self-esteem/confidence, respect child
Enjoy child
Good teacher of child
Have realistic expectations, understand his age
Get to know him/her
Good role model
Listen, put myself "in their shoes," sensitive
Consistent, reliable
Talk with and reason
Meet basic needs, take care of child
Learning from mistakes

7a. What do you not do so well as a parent?

Lose temper/yell
Lose patience, become frustrated/over excited
Don't allow enough time/opportunity for child to interact with others
Don't give child enough time/not enough quality time with child
Can't always do what child wants because of other responsibilities
Put self first
Have problem bringing self to child's level
Don't listen as well as should
Give in
Overprotective
Too pushy, too high expectations
Don't do enough formal games together/teaching/verbalizations
Lack experience, wonder if could do better
Don't know certain things and not asking others
Inconsistent
Don't always agree with spouse
Have problems with:
 Discipline, setting limits
 Spanking
 Bedtime/night time
 Supper time
 Biting
 Dealing with tantrums
 Housekeeping
No time for career, not enough time for self
Don't do anything wrong

- Circumstances, e.g., tired, busy, other things on mind, work, etc.
- Consequences, e.g., works/does not work, appropriate/inappropriate, feel guilty, child doesn't understand, etc.

Question 8:

•Strategies of family interaction/behavior patterns (perceptions of family)

8a. What do you like about your family life?

Time at home with child, family time in relation to work time
Sense of family/family strength and stability/family traditions
Like each other and being together, get along well with spouse
Like doing things together/have fun together
Sit down and listen to each other, communicate
Children getting older, easier, and more enjoyable
Good environment
Encouragement
Time with extended family, friends
Do some things separately
Like taking care of house
Accept family as is
Sometimes don't like family very much/don't like anything about family life

8b. When you have a problem with your family life, maybe something you don't like about your family or something you want to change, what do you do?

Unpleasant verbal interaction--snap at/fight/nag/argue/hold inside and then explode
Discuss/talk and work on, write things down and discuss
Plan consequences
Let things slide, do nothing/ignore
Don't know what to do
Contact others/find people with similar problems, find how they deal with their problems, use their ideas
Seek outside help/counseling
Turn inward, depend on self, think about awhile, worry
Pray
Get angry with self
Cry and forget it
Spend time alone, go for a walk alone
Go ahead and do what want to do

•Circumstances

•Consequences (works/does not work, appropriate/inappropriate)

Questions 9. As a parent you spend a lot of time taking care of other people. How do you take care of yourself?

• **Strategies of self-care/self-care behavior**

- Get help from other parent
- Have time alone/take time for self, go for walk alone
- Do projects of interest to self
- Buy something for self/treat self
- Act to get attention
- Verbalize feelings to spouse/children
- Read
- Take a class, take "this" class/parent education class
- Get together with friends, relatives
- Have a fulfilling job, use work as a stress release
- Keep self and house clean, organized
- Go to school
- Take a vacation
- Join health club, exercise, watch health and nutrition
- Do not take care of self

• **Circumstances**

• **Consequences** (works/does not work, appropriate/inappropriate)

Question 10. (Postprogram interview only)

What changes, if any, have you noted in your child or family from participating in this program? What are the main things you yourself have gotten from participating in the program?

• **Changes in:**

- Child
- Family
- Self/parent

• **Circumstances**

• **Consequences**

NOTE: When comparing preprogram interview and postprogram interview questions, note two kinds of change:

- Parent's reported changes in child, family, and self
- Changes we perceive in pre and post answers

Capitol Square 550 Cedar Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101 612/296-6104

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 15, 1991

TO: Early Childhood Family Education Parent Outcome Evaluators

FROM: Betty Cooke, Early Childhood Family Education Specialist *Betty Cooke*

RE: Final Steps in Statewide Early Childhood Family Education Parent Outcome Study

Soon you will be conducting your end-of-the-year postprogram parent interviews. It is likely to be a fascinating experience to listen to and record what parents have to say and notice possible changes in their responses. Hopefully, you will find most of the parents you interviewed in the fall still involved in the program. As indicated in the interview instructions from Michael Patton last July, our goal is to have 8 complete preprogram and postprogram interviews from each participating school district. If you've done fewer than 8 preprogram interviews, it is important that you reach every parent for the postprogram interviews if at all possible. Those of you doing interviews with any of the special populations (single parents, teen parents, or parents from low income two-parent families) may have additional interviews to be analyzed because you elected to also do interviews with these particular groups.

Michael and I met recently to begin planning for our two days together for data analysis in June. Careful attention to detail in the preparation of the data will be critical to the success of our analysis work. This project is a huge undertaking as you well know by now, and you are key to its success. It is likely to yield information that will be of great importance to Early Childhood Family Education and programs like ours for years to come, and you can feel proud of the vital role you play in obtaining this information.

When you are done with your postprogram interviews, both the preprogram and postprogram interview data need to be prepared in a very specific way for the analysis in June. Michael outlined many of the details of how to prepare the data in his "Guidelines for Administering Interviews" attached to the end of the set of interview questions you received last July. Please refer to his guidelines again before you do your postprogram interviews. At the risk of seeming repetitious, I've briefly repeated below some of the key points from his guidelines in addition to several others we've added. This is clearly a lot of detail, but it is necessary to insure that we'll have data in an easy-to-use format on June 25 and 26.



Postprogram Interview Guidelines:

• Since the preprogram and postprogram interview questions are different, you must have the results of the preprogram interview with you to do the postprogram interview in order to: (1) be sure that you're asking questions about the same child (for parents with more than one child in the program) and (2) to follow up question #7.

• Postprogram interviews can be done any time after the parent has been in the program for about two "quarters" or the equivalent, the later the better to allow as much program participation as possible. If at all possible, wait to do the postprogram interviews until the end of April or May for spring quarter participants.

Data Recording and Preparation Guidelines:

• As with the preprogram interviews, all postprogram interviews are to be tape recorded and transcribed verbatim.

• We will need two different sets of data for the analysis in June. **Every sheet of paper for both sets of data needs the school district number and the parent code on it. This is essential!!!**

(1) First set of data by question in order to analyze the data question by question:

- Place the answer to each question of the pre and post interviews on a separate sheet of paper (with the parent code and school district number on each sheet)
- Staple the pre and post answers together, question by question, for each parent. This means that the pre and post answers to question #1 for "Parent A" are attached together as are the pre and post answers of "Parent A" for each of the other questions. This means you will have at least 20 sheets of paper for each parent interviewed with at least 10 sets of at least 2 sheets of paper for each parent.
- We'll first analyze all of the data question by question, so after you have each pre and post answer for each question stapled together and labeled for each parent, we ask that you then clip together all stapled sets of pre and post answers to each question, i.e., all pre and post answers to question #1 from all parents, all pre and post answers to question #2 from all parents, etc. This will make it easy to immediately put your data in piles by question when you come to the June analysis meeting.

(2) Second set of data with the entire pre and post interview together for each individual parent in order to analyze the data by individual. After we complete the analysis question by question, we will select a number of individuals as case studies to analyze in their entirety. It is not possible to analyze the entire set of data from every single individual in this manner, so we will select several as representative case examples. This requires that the second set of data be prepared in the following manner:

- Place the entire set of answers together for the pre and post interviews for each parent without separating them page by page. **Be sure to place the school district number and parent code on each sheet of paper!!!**

- Attach the Participant Questionnaire to the set of data for each parent with their parent code and school district number on it.
- Attach the Profile of Participation (in July, 1990 mailing) to the set of data for each parent with their parent code and school district number on it. As indicated in an earlier memo from me, you do not need to attach an Enrollment Form to this set of information on each parent.
- All of this data on each individual parent (the answers to the pre and post interview questions, their Participant Questionnaire, and their Profile of Participation) should be stapled together for each parent interviewed from your program. This means that if you complete 8 pre and post parent interviews, you will have 8 sets of data stapled together for this second set of data.

NOTE: If you interviewed single parents, teen parents, or parents from two-parent low-income families, prepare their data in the exact same manner (including both sets of data), but keep their data separate from all other parent interviews and label their data as to the special one of these parent groups they represent.

Two other related guidelines:

- Keep a master copy of the data for yourself. Don't bring your originals for analysis!!!
- Bring a copy of the Interview Process Record to the June meeting if you have not already mailed it to me so we can later compile a record of how everyone in the state conducted the interviews.

Whew! This is really a lot of detail, but this kind of attention to detail is essential to the accuracy and success of this project and will make our work in June more enjoyable.

I have received 144 preprogram interviews from 14 of the 28 participating districts as of today. These have been much appreciated and well used. With these interviews I am in the process of developing a tentative category system of major themes that seem to emerge across the interview data. We will begin our two days of analysis with this framework to help us get started, realizing that it will be subject to change based on everyone's input as we more fully analyze all of the data. If you have not already sent me your transcribed preprogram interviews, keep them now until you bring them to the June meeting prepared in the format outlined in this letter.

This will be your last formal communication from me about this project before our two day meeting in June. Just a reminder about the meeting:

WHEN: Tuesday and Wednesday, June 25 and 26, 1991
9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. each day

WHERE: Earle Brown Center, St. Paul Campus, University of Minnesota (map enclosed)

As with our other meetings, there is no fee for this session, but we need to know in advance how many are coming. Please call Teresa at 612-296-8414 with names by Friday, June 21.

Travel expenses are reimbursable for greater Minnesota program representatives as needed. This could include mileage or airfare, lodging, and meals. Some nearby motels are:

Sunwood Inn	612-647-1637	\$49 single	\$54 double
Day's Inn-Roseville	612-636-6730	\$33	\$33
Day's Inn-Un of MN	612-623-3999	\$39	\$45
Holiday Inn-Roseville	612-636-4567	\$46	\$46

When making reservations, be sure to ask for the "government rate" for attending a meeting at the University of Minnesota Earle Brown Center.

We hope you all realize what an important and complex task you are involved in as you review the details of this memo. We can never thank you enough for the tremendous contributions you are making to the success of this project. Thanks so much for everything and see you in June! It should be an exciting two day experience for all of us.

If you have questions at any time about the project before then, feel free to call me at 612-296-6130.

Question 1 & 2:

Appendix E

A. No pre-post change: Low knowledge level; vague; inappropriate descriptors

Number: _____

Quote Examples:

ID #	Pre Quotes	Post Quotes
194		
200		200

Changing Times, Changing Families

Minnesota Early Childhood Family Education

Parent Outcome Interview Study

Summary

A recent study of parents new to Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program revealed five overall change themes in their responses to interview questions before and after a year of participation. These changes included:

- 1. Increased feelings of support from others, knowing they are "not alone" in their feelings and experiences and that other parents have the same problems and concerns;**
- 2. An increased sense of confidence and self-esteem as a parent;**
- 3. Increased knowledge, awareness and understanding about children and child development and the parental role in relation to child development;**
- 4. Changed perceptions and expectations for themselves as parents**

and for their children based on increased knowledge, awareness and understanding about children and child development and the parental role in relation to child development; and

- 5. Changes in behavior based on increased feelings of support from others, increased self-confidence, increased knowledge, and changed perceptions and expectations of their children and themselves.**

Increased feelings of support and self-confidence, change in knowledge and expectations, change in behavior — these changes are what Early Childhood Family Education is all about. Uncovering evidence of these types of change in parents after a year or less of participation in Early Childhood Family Education was the intent of this study. But first, "What is Early Childhood Family Education? Why is it needed? What happens in it?"



Early Childhood Family Education

Early Childhood Family Education is a voluntary public school program for all Minnesota families with children between the ages of birth and kindergarten. More than 213,000 young children and their parents participated in the program during the 1990-91 school year. The mission of Early Childhood Family Education is to strengthen families and support the ability of parents to provide the best possible environment for the healthy growth and development of their children. Funded by over \$26 million in state aid and local levies in fiscal year 1992, it is the nation's largest and oldest program of its kind.

Changes in society underscore the need for Early Childhood Family Education. The high divorce rate creates a growing number of single parent and stepparent families. Economic pressures result in more families in which both parents are employed. A growing percentage of children and families are living in poverty which makes meeting even basic needs a daily struggle. The high mobility and general complexity of modern life combine with these and other factors to create intense stress on families of all income levels.

Early Childhood Family Education programs meet the needs of families in their communities in a variety of ways. Most programs include the following:

- Parent discussion groups
- Play and learning activities for children
- Parent-child interaction activities
- Special events for the entire family

- Home visits
- Early screening for children's health and developmental problems
- Information on other community resources for families and young children
- Libraries of books, toys and other learning materials

Various types and intensities of services are offered. Families select those most appropriate for them. Typically a family attends a two hour session each week which includes parent-child interaction time and additional learning opportunities for infants, toddlers and preschoolers while parents are involved in a discussion group. Families needing more or different services may receive home visits and other more specialized services. Programs also offer special sessions for families with specific concerns such as single parents, teen parents, parents of children with disabilities, employed parents and others. It is the goal of Early Childhood Family Education to serve a representative cross-section of families with young children. This frequently requires special outreach and program delivery strategies.

Program activities are provided at a variety of times during the day, evenings and weekends by qualified parent educators and early childhood teachers. Program sites include schools, shopping centers, apartment buildings, homeless shelters, churches and other community facilities. The programs work closely with education, health and human service agencies to assist parents and children in obtaining other services when needed.



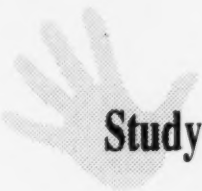
Study Process

Staff in Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education programs recently worked with Michael Q. Patton, nationally known and widely published program evaluator from the University of Minnesota, and Betty Cooke, Early Childhood Family Education Specialist with the Minnesota Department of Education, to study the effects of the program on parent participants. A key criterion of the study was to make the evaluation process part of the regular, everyday program and involve program staff in data collection and analysis.

Patton worked with staff from a statewide sample of 24 programs to develop a set of interview questions to be asked of parents new to the program prior to and at the end of participation during the 1990-91 school year. The questions focused on core elements of change likely to occur for parents in Early Childhood Family Education programs across the state including changes in knowledge, perceptions, behavior and social support. Since Early Childhood Family Education staff developed the questions, the assumption was made that content related to the questions was an integral part of all Early Childhood Family Education programs.

The questions and procedures for asking them were piloted during the winter and spring of 1990. Everyone involved in collecting the data spent a day in June 1990 working with Patton and Cooke to learn how to analyze the pilot data and refine the interview process to be used in the actual study. In the fall of 1990, parents new to

Early Childhood Family Education were interviewed just prior to their first class series. These parents were asked similar questions at the end of the school year; 183 parents completed the study — 156 in general parent groups, 16 in parent groups specifically for single parents, and 11 in teen parent groups. The interview data from each group were analyzed separately. The staff involved in the study worked two days in June 1991 analyzing the data. Analysis involved identifying changes in the parents' responses after participating one year in the program.



Study Results

Each parent's complete, clear response to each interview question was coded and counted for a total of 2,594 responses. The majority of coded parent responses reflected parent change after up to one year of participation in an Early Childhood Family Education program. Among the general parent group, 61 percent of their responses reflected change, while 67 percent of the single parent responses showed change. Of the teen parent responses, 59 percent indicated change.

The actual responses of the general and single parent groups were very similar. Teen parent responses indicated the least amount of change and the greatest need for some type of further program involvement. Parent responses reflected a predominant pattern of change in their feelings about themselves and their sense of support from others and in their knowledge, perceptions and expectations about their children which together appear to form the basis for subsequent behavior change.

Parents reflected a broad range of knowledge regarding child development and parenting in their interview responses. Some began the program with little or no knowledge or with misunderstandings of child development and behavior and showed movement toward more developmentally appropriate knowledge and understandings. Other parents exhibited moderate to high knowledge levels when they entered the program and demonstrated more expansive, comprehensive and complex understandings as they completed the program year. A small portion of parent

responses reflected low knowledge levels, vague or developmentally inappropriate descriptions and no significant change over a year of program participation.

Specific examples of behavior change indicated by parents in their responses fell into the following categories:

- Stopping to observe, listen and think before acting with their children; movement from reaction to situations to forethought before action in situations
- Beginning to respond to their children based on the child's perspective, becoming more in tune with and sensitive to their children's needs and point of view
- Giving time and attention to their children
- Giving their children choices
- Encouraging their children to explore, to solve problems rather than doing things for them
- Repeatedly modeling new behaviors
- Talking about, explaining situations to their children
- Allowing their children to express feelings, including anger
- Redirecting their children's behavior when needed
- Removing themselves or their children from tense situations for either one or both to regain composure
- Involving another adult when needed

Many parents indicated a larger repertoire of developmentally appropriate interaction

strategies and/or more options and alternatives for responding to and interacting with their children after a year of program participation. Some parents expressed a decrease in such behaviors as yelling, screaming, hitting and spanking and a reduction in feelings of inadequacy and guilt.

Many parents expressed continuing struggles with the need for more patience and the challenges they experienced in disciplining or guiding their children's behavior. Circumstances which they could not always control, such as work, marital or financial difficulties or being too tired or too busy, often interfered with their ability to make desired changes. Parents also found it hard to make changes in well established behavior patterns or life styles even though their awareness had been raised and a desire for change was evident. A number of parents expressed a recognition that it is "okay" not to be a perfect parent.

Parent responses reflected general satisfaction with family life. When problems with family life occurred, parents indicated they were most likely to "talk about" the problems as a primary means of problem solution. This often involved using problem solving skills that included identifying the problem and feelings about the problem, setting goals for addressing the problem, identifying strategies for making changes to meet these goals and then taking action to make changes. Most of this communication in two-parent families was between spouses, but it also often involved other family members, friends and teachers and other parents in the program. Enhanced family communication was most evident to parents in two-parent families when both parents were involved in some way in the program.

Parents were asked to identify how they took care of themselves. Responses reflected a continuum of ways parents did this. Some of the parents were doing little or nothing to take care of themselves; some did things to take care of themselves but felt guilty about it; some felt supported by their partners or families in taking care of themselves and in accomplishing household tasks, and some did not; and some appeared to do well taking care of themselves through a variety of activities.

Over three-fourths of the parents indicated a number of changes they observed in their children that they associated with program participation. These included:

- Improved social interaction and relationships, development of social skills;
- An increased sense of self-confidence and self-esteem;
- Language development and enhanced communication skills; and
- Expression of feelings.

All of these are commonly recognized elements of school readiness. Many parents indicated that their children were more likely to be ready to start kindergarten after program participation.



Implications and Recommendations

The following provides a list and discussion of implications and recommendations for curriculum and program development based on study results and the input of Early Childhood Family Education staff involved in data analysis.

1. Incorporate knowledge of child development and parent-child relations/family relations into all programming.

Some parents, especially teen parents, come to programs with little or no knowledge related to being parents. Others enter programs with more knowledge and need to continue building on this base as they develop deeper understandings and more effective applications to everyday parenting situations. This diversity in knowledge levels has implications for at least informally getting a sense of parents' knowledge levels when they begin involvement. This also highlights the value of a program based on universal eligibility for all families where parents at all knowledge levels are integrated together in classes and can learn from one another.

2. Provide continuous opportunities to address ongoing issues related to guidance of children.

As programs provide information to parents about developmentally appropriate parent-child interaction strategies, they need to help

parents think about the intrusive nature of some interaction strategies and consider approaches/strategies that are more respectful and supportive of the child and less intrusive. Closely related to this issue is the need to help parents become better observers of their children, "tuning in" to cues from their children and being more sensitive to their children's needs and interests. Also, a clearer understanding of some techniques used and talked about is needed, e.g., redirection, bribery, threats, consequences, choices, use of "time out," etc.

3. Communicate the importance of support from others.

Knowing that they are "not alone" and that others share common concerns and experiences is one of the strongest benefits of the program expressed by parents, especially by single parents. Also, an increased sense of support from others is likely to enhance the effectiveness of new understandings and insights and their impact on problem solving and meaningful behavior change.

4. Increase recognition of the value and use of parent-child interaction as an especially powerful learning experience for parents.

Parent-child interaction time provides parents with an opportunity to see and better understand the actual implementation of

some of the approaches/strategies suggested through modeling of developmentally appropriate behaviors by staff and other parents. It is also an excellent opportunity for parents to develop and refine observation and listening skills and "tuning in" to their children as a way to more effectively support their children's development. Since it is often difficult to make the transition from "knowing" to "doing," it also provides parents a chance to practice new behaviors and receive prompt and specific feedback from staff and other adults.

5. Clearly communicate program goals to parents.

Parent responses occasionally indicate a lack of understanding of the rationale for program activities. It is important for staff to communicate overall goals as well as reasons for specific activities and approaches with children and parents.

6. Continue emphasis on parent self-esteem and parent self-care as being of value both to parents personally and to their families.

Parent responses indicate some recognition of the value of self-esteem and self-care and their direct relationship to children's self-esteem and self-care. Yet many parents show a lack of confidence and self-esteem and seem to do little to take care of themselves. This shows a need for further emphasis regarding these issues.

7. More explicitly incorporate development of family communication and problem solving skills into program content.

"Talking together" with partners, other family members or friends is clearly the most common way parents deal with solving family problems. Therefore, it is important to give parents tools for doing so more effectively.

8. Provide ongoing, weekly, long-term participation/involvement opportunities for parents.

Long-term, regular involvement contributes to:

- Increasing knowledge and understanding, changing perceptions and expectations;
- Increasing confidence and self-esteem, helping parents recognize and build on their strengths;
- Building support networks; and
- Developing skills leading to behavior change.

Behaviors parents use in interaction with their children are likely to have been formed over time and are strongly influenced by their own childhood experiences. Change in such established behavior patterns is slow and challenging and is likely to require consistent involvement and support over time. More intense, long-term involvement is particularly indicated for parents who are struggling with very stressful personal and family situations and for teen parents.

9. Increase involvement of both parents.

When both parents are involved, communication is stronger because of shared information and ideas, and family relationships and general well being seem to be enhanced. Involvement of other support persons for single parents when fathers or mothers are not available is also desirable.

10. Encourage and continue to create ways for family members to spend more time together.

Time together is clearly valued and seems to enhance personal and family life for many parents and their children. Yet it is a challenge for many families to create or preserve and productively use this time together. Early Childhood Family Education, through its ongoing programming and special events, is an enjoyable and productive way for young families to spend time together. It also acts as a catalyst for improving the overall quality of time family members spend together.

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